

SOCIALIST PARADISE OR TOWER OF TOTAL SURVEILLANCE?  
METAMORPHOSES OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE IN CHERNYSHEVSKY AND  
DOSTOEVSKY

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## **ABSTRACT**

Ekaterina Turta: Socialist Paradise or Tower of Total Surveillance? Metamorphoses of the Crystal Palace in Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky  
(Under the direction of Christopher Putney)

In this thesis, I attempt to re-evaluate the symbolic meaning of the Crystal Palace in Russian literature (particularly in Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky) in order to highlight its complexity and thus supplement and advance the existing scholarship. Drawing upon works by Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky, I showcase different manifestations of this multi-faceted symbol, which became an embodiment of both Russian dreams and nightmares about the West. I also attempt to trace the ways in which the image of the Crystal Palace has been transformed by these two Russian writers.

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## Introduction

The Crystal Palace is an important symbol in Russian literature. In discussing this symbol, scholars usually underscore that it was inspired by a real building—the Crystal Palace at Sydenham in the United Kingdom. Although some critics date it from 1851 (Berman 237; Frank, *Through the Russian Prism* 197; Peace 255; Paperno 211; Young, “The Crystal Palace... (2)”) and others from 1854 (Katz, “But This Building...” 69), the fact is that there were two Crystal Palaces.

The original Crystal Palace was constructed in 1851 at Hyde Park in London. It was the world’s first large-scale building to be made entirely of iron and glass. This building was designed by Sir Joseph Paxton (1803 – 1865) for the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations. After the plan for the future Crystal Palace was approved, Prince Albert, the royal consort, declared that the Great Exhibition of 1851 was to give the British nation “a living picture of the point of development at which mankind has arrived, and a new starting point from which all nations will be able to direct their future exertions” (qtd. in Hobhouse 14). The Crystal Palace, which was created especially for the Great Exhibition, became an embodiment of these aspirations—a monument to human ingenuity and a symbol of the epoch as a vanguard of progress and modernity (Katz, “But This Building...” 67).

It is no surprise that the building became an emblem of the event it housed. The edifice that was created as a venue for the display of the industrial achievements that marked the middle of the nineteenth century fascinated its visitors even more than the Great Exhibition. It was almost entirely constructed of the most contemporary materials and pre-fabricated throughout. For this edifice 300,000 panes of glass were manufactured in a few weeks (Hobhouse 50). The building itself was erected in five months—record time for a

structure of this size. The ground floor alone was 772,824 square feet, the galleries were 217,100 square feet, the nave was 64 feet in height, and the central transept was 408 feet in height and 108 feet in length (Beaver 23).<sup>1</sup> According to the 1851 assessments of the building's dimensions by the British Institute of Civil Engineering, the Crystal Palace was about six times larger than St. Paul's Cathedral in London, the construction of which required 35 years (Katz, "But This Building..." 67). Suffice it to say that the Crystal Palace was perceived as proof of progress in science and technology—"a dramatic demonstration and visible summary of all that had been achieved up to that point" (Katz, "But This Building..." 66).<sup>2</sup> As the modernist architect Konrad Wachsmann enthused, "from the logic and reason, initiating the spirit of the new technological era, rose a beauty of a kind not previously known..." (qtd. in Richards 15).

Significantly, the Crystal Palace was initially called the Great Industrial Building. This edifice got its famous name—The Crystal Palace—only after British journalist Douglas Jerrold first used this expression as a metaphor in regard to Paxton's building in his article for an 1850 issue of the humorous magazine *Punch* (Piggott 5). In his book on the Crystal Palace, J. Piggott explains that the phrase connoted fairyland (5) and that, as is commonly assumed, it was first used by Shelley in *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) "where in Act IV the Chorus of Spirits sing of a submarine palace" (Piggott 5). It then reappeared in the translation from the German of De La Motte Fouque's popular romance *Undine*, published in 1843, where it was used in the description of the submarine palace of the Mediterranean water-nymph. A ballet rendition of the romance was staged in London that same year (Piggott 5).

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<sup>1</sup> In his book on the Crystal Palace, Patrick Beaver writes: "The speed with which the work was done is amazing. Paxton himself reported seeing the erection of three columns and two girders within sixteen minutes" (Beaver 23).

<sup>2</sup> The civil engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel assessed the Crystal Palace as the most outstanding marvel of the entire Exhibition: "I believe that there is no one object to be exhibited so peculiarly fitted for competition as the design and construction of the vast building itself. Skill of construction, economy of construction, and rapidity of construction would call forth all those resources to which England is distinguished. I believe it might be the grandest subject of competition of the whole affair" (qtd. in Katz, "But This Building..." 66).

Even though Paxton's building towered above ground rather than underwater, the name given by the British journalist aptly captured the overall impression this glass edifice had on the British and foreign public: Paxton's marvel was frequently referred as a fairyland (Katz, "But This Building..." 68). Indeed, this ultimately modern, enormous building mesmerized its visitors not only because it contained more than 100,000 highly ornate and colorful objects from all over the world (such as a collection of ancient marble statuary, paintings, furniture), but also because it "featured the first man-made artificial climate—long before Montreal's Biosphere and Biosphere 2 in Oracle, Arizona" (Katz, "But This Building..." 67). It enclosed flowers and pots and large plants, trees and birds, fountains and long vistas (Piggott 11, Hobhouse 37). In addition, it was equipped with a drainage system and an effective air-conditioning system—both of which were novel for that time and made the building perfectly watertight and well-ventilated.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to say that this unprecedented enclosure was perceived, on the one hand, as an unworldly, magical place—"the crystal dream itself" (Katz, "But This Building..." 67). On the other hand, it was beheld as "the universe," or "a world in miniature." (Katz, "But This Building..." 67).

Moreover, this universe in miniature, which was enclosed in an edifice of a "beauty of a kind not previously known," was entirely man-made and thus served as proof of the triumph of man as a creator. It constituted "mankind's secular ambition"—its ascendance to a position of power over the world (Katz, "But This Building..." 67). In his 1850 speech devoted to the upcoming Great Exhibition, Prince Albert stated:

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<sup>3</sup> The drainage system was formed by so-called "Paxton gutters" which were laid along and across the grinders on the top of the roof. These were wooden beams with three grooves cut into each of them by a special machine invented by Paxton. The rainwater moved from the glass panes into the deep grooves in the tops of the beams, while "smaller grooves on either side caught steady condensation which was [...] formed on the under-side of the glass by the exhalation of thousands of visitors" (Hobhouse 50). Then streams of water from both the large and small grooves were carried through the hollow vertical columns down to the underground pipes (see Hobhouse 50, Piggott 6). Furthermore, to keep the temperature inside even cooler than outside, a calico awning was drawn across the roof. In addition, the louvre shutters went up along the basement and every third upright compartment, whereas the floor was composed of nine-inch boards at half-inch intervals (Hobhouse 51). The louvres and the flooring formed an effective air-conditioning system: the pressure differential forced the hot air to move outside through the louvres and drew cooler air up through the floor.



Nobody who has paid any attention to the peculiar features of the present era will doubt for a moment that we are living at a period of most wonderful transition, which tends rapidly to accomplish that great end, to which, indeed, all history points—the realization of the unity of mankind... [...] The distances which separate the different nations and parts of the globe are rapidly vanishing before the achievements of modern invention... [...] So man is approaching a more complete fulfillment of that great and sacred mission he has to perform in this world... (qtd. in Katz, “But This Building...” 66)

Likewise, the creation of the Crystal Palace was interpreted as an omen of mankind’s glorious future: a promise of the unity of nations and ultimate enlightenment (Katz, “But This Building...” 66). It is no surprise that during the time that the Crystal Palace was open to the public—from May 1, 1851 to October 11, 1851—over six million visitors from all over the world strolled through its galleries: average daily attendance was 42,831 (Beaver 63). In spite of the popularity of Paxton’s spectacle, after the Exhibition closed, the Crystal Palace was dismantled and Hyde Park was restored to its original state. However, the story of this magnificent building does not stop here.

The British could not take leave of “one of the greatest buildings of all time and one of the most influential structures ever erected” (Katz, “But This Building...” 65). The original Crystal Palace was reconstructed on a larger scale on the summit of Sydenham Hill—a quiet wooded area in the suburbs of London at the time. Rebuilding began on August 5, 1852 and lasted for almost two years: the new Crystal Palace was opened on June 10, 1854. Although the second building aimed to prolong the life of the original Crystal Palace, it in fact turned into a more ambitious project known as “the Crystal Palace Company.” The directors of this private enterprise, Fox and Henderson, wished to outdo the success of the Great Exhibition.

In the preface to his book on the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, Piggott emphasizes: “The speed with which it was planned, designed and built, considering the many problems and setbacks of the site and unlucky circumstances, was an even more phenomenal achievement than the first Palace in Hyde Park that housed the emblematic 1851 Great Exhibition” (V). Paxton, who was again in charge of the entire project, transformed the

building from a simple three-floor structure into a complex five-floor construction with a total floor area (ground floor and all the galleries) of 843,656 square feet (Beaver 83). In addition, the 200 acres of park surrounding the building were turned into an enormous garden: the slopes and hollows were turned into lakes, fountain basins, stately avenues and terraces, and scenic footpaths. All of these were amply decorated with statues, busts, and vases from all over the world. In addition, both the building and the garden were replete with rare trees, plants and flowers that Paxton purchased at great cost. For example, among the treasures of the Crystal Palace Company was a famous collection of palms and other plants assembled by Messrs Loddiges of Hackney in a span of more than one hundred years (Beaver 79). In total, the whole enterprise (including the cost of the building, the park, all the interior decorations and exhibitions) cost £1,300,000, whereas the original Crystal Palace was purchased by Fox and Henderson for £70,000 (Beaver 83, 79).

While the Sydenham Palace was a much greater undertaking than the original one in Hyde Park in terms of the size and price of the entire venue, the essential difference between the two structures was “the range of reference in [the] time-scale” of what was on display. While the original Crystal Palace was a microcosm of the mid-nineteenth-century industry of all nations, the new one was conceived of as “a three-dimensional encyclopedia of both nature and art”: it was a national winter garden and “a comprehensive historical museum of evolution and of civilizations” (Piggott 11). Those who visited the Crystal Palace at Sydenham were able to see the largest collection of historical and contemporary works of art such as plaster casts of statuary, paintings, and furniture. In the “Fine Arts Courts” they could acquaint themselves with historic architectural styles that were reproduced with painted plaster over brick, and aimed to illustrate the development of architecture. Those who visited the new Crystal Palace could also learn about the daily lives of people from other times and nations reconstructed in the form of ethnographic tableaux. In addition, in the Sydenham

gardens that surrounded the Palace, strollers could find life-size reproductions of extinct animals in appropriate settings and familiarize themselves with the history of landscape gardening by viewing “various formal and informal modes in the Park” (Piggott V). As Paxton believed, all of these treasures were supposed to illustrate arts and sciences on a large and natural scale, “thus making practical Botany, Ornithology, and Geology familiar to every visitor” (qtd. in Beaver 69).

In his article, Philip Landon summarizes the significance of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham: “Like other Victorian museums, the Crystal Palace represents history as an evolutionary sequence, projecting contemporary industrial society as the utopian product of a teleological process” (30). Thus, this ambitious and expensive venture was fueled not only by the desire to attract as many visitors as possible in order to gain money, but also by idealistic and educational aspirations that reflected the spirit of the age. In her speech at the Crystal Palace Company’s opening ceremony on June 10, 1854, Queen Victoria stated:

It is my earnest wish and hope that the bright anticipations, which have been formed as to [the Crystal Palace’s] future destiny, may under the blessing of Divine Providence, be completely realized; and that this wonderful structure, and the treasures of art and knowledge which it contains, may long continue to elevate and instruct, as well as to delight and amuse, the minds of all classes of our people. (Qtd. in Piggott 5)

It is fair to say that Queen Victoria’s wish came true. Until the Crystal Palace at Sydenham burnt down to the ground in 1936, it accommodated an average of two million visitors a year. For eighty-two years it was a beloved place of family leisure that proved affordable for people from a wide array of different social classes. The official Guide (1857) “confidently eulogized it as a moral and physical palliative, ‘an accessible and inexpensive substitute for the injurious and debasing amusements of a crowded metropolis’” (Landon 28). Yet it was used as a venue for a wide range of events. Accordingly, the Crystal Palace at Sydenham not only prolonged the life of the original one and inherited its status as a symbol of technological progress and unity of nations, but also became a profitable private enterprise

that aimed to educate and entertain visitors from any social class. For eight decades, it had been “acclaimed enthusiastically both by the English common people and by foreigners from all over the world” (Berman 238).

It is no wonder that buildings as spectacular as the two Crystal Palaces would infect the minds and imaginations of thousands of people all over the world. In many countries, architects attempted to emulate Paxton’s creations (but on a much smaller scale): “Crystal Palaces” were built in New York, Dublin and Munich in 1853, in Paris in 1855, and in Madrid in 1873 (Piggott 9). Even though no Crystal Palace was ever constructed in the Russian Empire (or even in modern Russia), the emblematic building has had a great influence on the Russian imagination.

In his book *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Marshall Berman underscores that “for Russians in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Crystal Palace was one of the most haunting and compelling of modern dreams” (236). He goes on to say that: “The extraordinary psychic impact it had on Russians—and it plays a far more important role in Russian than in English literature and thought—springs from its role as a specter of modernization haunting a nation that was writhing ever more convulsively in the anguish of backwardness” (Berman 236). Such an interpretation seems accurate if one takes into account that, in Russian literature, the “crystal” fever began only after the publication of Chernyshevsky’s novel *What Is To Be Done?* (1863). Nikolai Chernyshevsky was a Russian socialist and Westernizer who envisioned an ideal future society as one that was housed in a glass megalopolis modeled after the Crystal Palace. The novel *What Is To Be Done?*, in which Chernyshevsky described his vision of the future, elicited a number of literary responses immediately after it was published. The most noteworthy of these was the novella *Notes from Underground* (1864), in which Fyodor Dostoevsky—many of whose views had deep affinities with those of the Slavophiles—vehemently criticized Chernyshevsky’s ideal of

the Crystal Palace. Thus the Crystal Palace indeed became a touchstone in debates about westernization, modernity, and social transformation.

While I do not attempt to undermine this valid interpretation offered by Berman, I argue that it does not capture the overall complexity of this important symbol in Russian literature and even oversimplifies it. In this thesis, I attempt to re-evaluate the symbolic meaning of the Crystal Palace in Russian literature (particularly in Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky) in order to highlight its complexity and thus supplement and advance the existing scholarship.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I re-examine the image of the Crystal Palace in Chernyshevsky. I begin my analysis with a discussion of Chernyshevsky's journalist account of the real building—the Crystal Palace at Sydenham—that he penned in his article, “News on Literature, Art, Science and Industry,” published in the July 1854 issue of *Fatherland Notes* (*Otechestvennye zapiski*). In discussing the image of the Crystal Palace in Chernyshevsky, only some critics mention this article and usually only in passing because, from their perspective, it is merely a record of facts and does not touch upon any of the building's philosophical ramifications, nor does it offer any clear assessment of its cultural significance. Nonetheless, I argue that a close reading of this article might provide insight into Chernyshevsky's fascination with the real building and explain why Chernyshevsky invokes the image of this glass edifice in his novel, *What Is To Be Done?*.

Moreover, even though scholars previously have not incorporated this article into their analyses of Chernyshevsky's novel, I maintain that it is their failure to do so that prevents them from completely decoding the symbolic meaning of this image in *What Is To Be Done?*, and answering the question of why Chernyshevsky chose the British Crystal Palace as a model for his imaginary glass megalopolis. The second part of the first chapter of this thesis is solely devoted to the image of the Crystal Palace in Chernyshevsky's *What Is To Be*

*Done?*. I analyze this novel in view of his 1854 article on the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. By doing so, I attempt to shed light on different symbolic overtones of Chernyshevsky's ideal of the Crystal Palace that have been, thus far, largely unnoticed by the critics.

First of all, I insist that, in the analysis of Chernyshevsky's novel, it is crucial to differentiate between the two real Crystal Palaces. I believe that scholars' conflation of the two structures is a main pitfall of the existing scholarship. Some scholars claim that it was the original building (the one erected for the Great Exhibition) that inspired Nikolai Chernyshevsky's image of the Crystal Palace in *What Is To Be Done?*. This is the idea maintained by Joseph Frank and Sarah Young in their analyses of Chernyshevsky's novel (Frank, *Through the Russian Prism* 197, Young "Crystal Palace..."). On the contrary, Michael Katz points out that Chernyshevsky's Crystal Palace is a literary successor of the Palace that was located at Sydenham Hill (Katz, "But This Building..." 69). The latter is more accurate due to the fact that the Crystal Palace at Sydenham is the building with which the female protagonist of Chernyshevsky's novel, Vera Pavlovna, explicitly compares the glass megalopolis of her dream. Nonetheless, Katz also begins his discussion of Chernyshevsky's image of the Crystal Palace with a description of the original Palace that was constructed for the Great Exhibition in 1851. At first glance, this comparison seems to be justified since the Crystal Palace at Sydenham was a reconstructed version of the original Palace, and it is mainly for this reason that it is interpreted as a symbol of modernity and technological progress. However, as discussed above, the new Palace had its own defining features and was not merely a substitute for the original one. What is more, as I show in the first chapter of my thesis, Chernyshevsky was well aware of this fact. Yet, it is worth noting that he visited the Sydenham Palace in 1859—only three years before he began writing *What Is To Be Done?*. Thus, it seems logical to suggest that he intentionally chose the Crystal Palace at Sydenham (rather than the original one) as a model for his imaginary glass megalopolis in which the

denizens of the ideal Utopian society of the future dwell. Building upon this assumption, I argue that Chernyshevsky transforms the real building into a symbol by carefully choosing specific features of Paxton's Palace and imbuing them with a particular symbolic meaning. In the first chapter, I attempt to trace Chernyshevsky's methods for doing this.

The second chapter of this thesis is devoted to the image of the Crystal Palace in Dostoevsky. Although the critics usually only refer to his novella, *Notes from Underground*, when discussing his treatment of the Crystal Palace, I argue that this discussion should not be limited to this work alone. What is more, while scholars are accustomed to considering the image of the Crystal Palace portrayed in Dostoevsky's novella mainly as a criticism of Chernyshevsky's ideal, I argue that such an approach ignores the true meaning of the Crystal Palace in Dostoevsky. As I attempt to show in this thesis, Dostoevsky's treatment of the Crystal Palace is arguably even more rich and interesting than that of Chernyshevsky. First of all, *Notes from Underground* is not the first and only work in which Dostoevsky invokes the image of the Crystal Palace. He first refers to this image in his travelogue, *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863), which was published before Chernyshevsky's novel. Although the Crystal Palace in Dostoevsky's travelogue has been analysed by Joseph Frank and Sarah Young, it still requires a more extensive and accurate analysis. I argue that a close reading of *Winter Notes* might provide a key to understanding why Dostoevsky chose the Crystal Palace as the main point of his attack on Chernyshevsky in *Notes from Underground*. In addition, in my thesis, I consider one more work in which Dostoevsky invokes the image of the Crystal Palace—*Crime and Punishment* (1866). Dostoevsky's symbolic treatment of the Crystal Palace in this novel has never been discussed previously. Also, by offering a holistic analysis of the Crystal Palace in Dostoevsky's oeuvre, I attempt to showcase its different manifestations and transformations in Dostoevsky.

## Chapter I.

### From the Building into a Symbol: The Crystal Palace in Chernyshevsky

Nikolai Chernyshevsky was among the earliest admirers of both Crystal Palaces. He collected articles that were published in Western journals about both of the buildings (Chadaga 181). It was from sources such as these that he gained his knowledge about the two buildings and was able to picture both of them in his imagination. It is worth noting that he visited the Sydenham Palace in 1859. Even before his visit to Sydenham, Chernyshevsky published an article entitled “News on Literature, Art, Science and Industry” in the July 1854 issue of *Fatherland Notes* (*Otechestvennye zapiski*).<sup>4</sup> The first part of this 40-page article is devoted to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham and its opening ceremony, while the rest of the article deals with advances in industry and communication.

In discussing the Crystal Palace in Russian literature, scholars mention Chernyshevsky’s article only in passing, merely to prove that he had a positive attitude towards the building itself (Katz, “But This Building...” 69; Young “Crystal Palace...” and “The Crystal Palace...(1)”). In their short discussions of this journalistic account of the Crystal Palace, the scholars usually emphasize Chernyshevsky’s “glowing” language.<sup>5</sup> As a result, one may conclude that the Russian writer was particularly mesmerized by the elegance and beauty of the British spectacle. I argue, however, that the conclusion to be drawn from

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<sup>4</sup> Chernyshevskii, N.G. “Novosti literatury, iskusstv, nauk i promyshlennosti.” *Otechestvennye zapiski*. (Июль 1854): 81 – 121. Print.

<sup>5</sup> For example, in her analysis of the Crystal Palace in Russian literature, Sarah Young, who also mentions Chernyshevsky’s article, summarizes it by writing: “In July 1854, Chernyshevsky wrote a detailed and glowing review of the reopening of the Crystal Palace in the journal *Fatherland Notes*, describing it as ‘a miracle of art, beauty and splendour’, and claiming that ‘there has not been a single voice that would be raised against the Palace itself, against its idea and its execution’” (Young “The Crystal Palace...”).



Chernyshevsky's article and "glowing" language is more complex. I maintain that Chernyshevsky's journalistic account of the real Crystal Palace provides us with a key to understanding Chernyshevsky's fascination with the building, and helps answer the question of why he continues to explore the philosophical ramifications of the glass edifice in his novel *What Is To Be Done?*, which was written nine years after his article was published.

### **"But This Building—What on Earth Is It?": Paxton's Palace in the Eyes of Chernyshevsky**

At the very beginning of Chernyshevsky's journalistic account of the British spectacle, he states that the main purpose of his article is to "give a possibly complete overview of this wonderful building, about which none of the dozens of thousands of people, who participated in the festivities of its opening ceremony, nor hundreds of thousands of those who had visited the building in the subsequent few weeks could help talking about without zeal" (6).<sup>6</sup> Indeed, his article is an enthusiastic and detailed report that is replete with facts.

Chernyshevsky includes facts and figures on the building's dimensions and the cost of materials and labor required for its construction. He also lists the names of the people who were engaged in its reconstruction and who ran the Crystal Palace Company. He includes a plan of the entire structure and gives his readers a virtual tour of the entire Palace, beginning

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<sup>6</sup> "...представить [...] по возможности полное обозрѣніе замѣчательнаго зданія, о которомъ не можетъ безъ увлеченія говорить ни одинъ изъ десятковъ тысячъ людей, присутствовавшихъ при торжествѣ его открытія, и сотенъ тысячъ посѣтившихъ его въ-теченіе нѣсколькихъ слѣдующихъ недѣль" <sup>(81)</sup>. All English translations of quotations from this article are mine. The spelling in the Russian quotations is kept in accordance with the original.

It is also worth mentioning that, as Chernyshevsky points out, this overview partially overlaps with accounts of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham that were published in *Fatherland Notes* before, and that were devoted to the discussion of its origins, plan, and functions. In a footnote, Chernyshevsky indicates that this particular article is based on materials that were published in European journals such as *Revue Britannique*, *The Edinburgh Review*, *The Illustrated London News*, *The Athenaeum* and *Illustrirte Zeitung*. It was thanks to these materials that he was able to meticulously describe the building and its construction in his article.

at the ground floor and covering all of the spectacular Courts located on the upper floors of the building (from the Egyptian Court to the Alhambra Court). He concludes his description of the beautiful venue with a characterization of the Sydenham gardens. In total, he writes eleven pages about the interior and exterior of the Crystal Palace.

At first glance it seems that Chernyshevsky's meticulously detailed account was aimed at showing the readers that the Crystal Palace at Sydenham was "something unusually magnificent, elegant, and dazzling" (83), "a miracle of art, beauty and splendor" (82).<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, if readers would ignore the "glowing" language of Chernyshevsky's article, it would become clear that it was aimed at persuading his readers that the Crystal Palace at Sydenham was not merely a substitute for the original Paxton's Palace. He juxtaposes the new Crystal Palace with the original and proves that the former is far superior. He claims that the new building is more balanced in its proportions, whereas its predecessor was "unproportionally short in relation to its length" (84).<sup>8</sup> Yet, from his perspective, Sydenham Palace is more luxurious and elegant: "The Palace in Hyde Park [...] [as] a pantheon of world's industry was built in austere Doric style [...]; [while] Sydenham Palace [as] a museum of the arts was built in the style of luxurious Corinthian order and embellished with intricate ornamentation" (84).<sup>9</sup> On a superficial level it seems that Chernyshevsky is concerned with the difference in the design of these buildings, when in fact he is more interested in the difference between the two palaces' functions. He emphasizes that it is "the change in the purpose of the Palace [that] caused the change in [its] style" (84).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "нѣчто необыкновенно-великолѣпное, изящное, ослѣпительное" (Chernyshevskii 83), "чуд[о] искусства, красоты и великолѣпія" (Chernyshevskii 82).

<sup>8</sup> "непропорціально-низокъ сравнительно съ своею длиною" (Chernyshevskii 84).

<sup>9</sup> "Тайд-Паркскій Дворецъ [...] [как] пантеон[ъ] всемірной промышленности, былъ построенъ въ суровомъ дорическомъ стилѣ, [...]; Сейденгэмскій Дворецъ, служа музеемъ искусствъ, построенъ въ стилѣ роскошнаго коринтскаго ордена и покрытъ изящными орнаментами" (Chernyshevskii 84).

<sup>10</sup> "измѣненіе назначенія дворца повлекло за собою измѣненіе стиля его постройки" (Chernyshevskii 84).

He devotes several pages of his article to a discussion concerning the purpose of the Sydenham Palace in comparison with its predecessor. Chernyshevsky underscores that the Crystal Palace at Sydenham is a legitimate “son of the World Exhibition of 1851” (82),<sup>11</sup> because it inherited the cosmopolitan nature of its “father” by being constructed mainly by foreign workers (rather than British) and serving the purpose of uniting all the best that could be found in the arts of all the nations (82).<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, he underlines that the primary function of the Sydenham Palace is to educate people in an easy and entertaining manner. He explains that the British middle class is not educated enough to love and understand the sciences or eagerly read theoretical monographs. What is more, he points out that the exhibits displayed at the Palace at Sydenham would represent not only the life, traditions and achievements of the previous generations, but also those of modern society. In addition, Chernyshevsky notes that this wonderful museum with its statuary, long vistas, lush vegetation and fountains would become the best place for everyone to rest and spend leisure time, regardless of his/her class (86).<sup>13</sup>

To sum up what he has written thus far about the Sydenham Palace’s different functions, Chernyshevsky writes that “this splendid building, which encloses so many treasures of the sciences and the arts, a great number of didactic and truly beautiful artifacts, is not only a great business enterprise, but also an establishment, which has a serious and useful goal” (95).<sup>14</sup> He also adds that “there has not been a single voice that would be raised

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<sup>11</sup> “сын[ъ] всемірной выставки 1851 года” (Chernyshevskii 82).

<sup>12</sup> “...служить соединеніемъ всего, что только можетъ быть найдено превосходнѣйшаго въ искусствѣ всѣхъ народовъ” (Chernyshevskii 82).

<sup>13</sup> “...своими фонтанами, оранжереями, статуями, своимъ архитектурнымъ великолѣпіемъ и разнообразіемъ содержанія, своими садами онъ долженъ быть для всѣхъ лучшимъ, привлекательнѣйшимъ мѣстомъ отдыха и развлеченія” (Chernyshevskii 86).

<sup>14</sup> “...великолѣпное зданіе, вмѣщающее въ себѣ столько сокровищъ науки и искусства, столько поучительнаго и истинно-прекраснаго, не только огромная спекуляція, но и учрежденіе, дѣйствительно имѣющее цѣль серьезную и полезную” (Chernyshevskii 95).

against the Palace itself, against its idea and its execution” (95).<sup>15</sup> Yet, for greater effect, Chernyshevsky includes an excerpt from the speech of Queen Victoria that was delivered at the opening ceremony of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. As mentioned above, in this speech Queen Victoria declares that the Crystal Palace is “a worthy realization of one of the most virtuous ideas of modern civilization” (96)<sup>16</sup> and therefore might be called “a noble monument to genius, knowledge and shrewdness of [her] subjects” (97).<sup>17</sup> Then she expresses her hope that such a grandiose edifice will be a source of enlightenment and entertainment for all the classes of the British nation (97).<sup>18</sup>

Thus, in his article, Chernyshevsky persuades his readers that the Crystal Palace at Sydenham was not a simple exhibition hall like its predecessor, but a grandiose enterprise that served a higher purpose—to bring about positive changes in the current social order by enlightening and entertaining its visitors regardless of their class. Moreover, he also attempts to prove that this “magnanimous” venture is not only useful, but also sustainable. He calculates its potential profit and comes to the conclusion that, most likely, the Crystal Palace will be as profitable for its creator and investors as it is useful for society (in terms of its intellectual, moral, and aesthetic value). Accordingly, it is clear that he sets out to give a “possibly complete overview” of this “miracle of art, beauty and splendor” in order to illustrate and disseminate his utilitarian ideas.

In the 1850s Chernyshevsky wrote a number of articles on literature and painting because it was the only way for him to give voice to his political views. “History, philosophy,

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<sup>15</sup> “...не было еще ни одного голоса, который поднялся бы противь самого дворца, противь его мысли и исполнения” (Chernyshevskii 95).

<sup>16</sup> “достойное осуществление одной изъ благороднѣйшихъ идей новѣйшей цивилизаціи” (Chernyshevskii 96).

<sup>17</sup> “благородный памятникъ гения, познаній и предприимчивости [еѣ] подданныхъ” (Chernyshevskii 97).

<sup>18</sup> “...долго будутъ служить на возвышеніе и образованіе, на удовольствіе и развлеченіе всѣмъ классамъ моего народа” (Chernyshevskii 97).

economics, not to speak of politics [...] were forbidden ground for anyone like Chernyshevsky—a follower of Feuerbach, a Socialist and a revolutionary” (Venturi 141). Nonetheless, Chernyshevsky chooses literature and the arts as the subject matter for his publications not only in order to mislead the censors, but also in order to expand the target audience (among whom he hopes to disseminate his own ideas) by discussing subjects that were of great interest to the public (Bogoslovskii *Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevskii*). Throughout his entire career, Chernyshevsky had considered the arts only as “private nourishment and a support for his activities” and “estimated artists only according to the width and depth of their convictions, according to their greatness as men” (Venturi 141).<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, it is no surprise that “[the] wonderful building about which [...] thousands of people [...] [cannot] help talking without zeal” attracted his attention (6).<sup>20</sup> One may argue that he achieved his goal of “enlightening” the public by infecting it with the ideal of the Crystal Palace only after he embarked on a fictional exploration of its implications in his socialist novel, *What Is To Be Done?* (1863).

### **The Crystal Palace as the Symbol of a Socialist Paradise in *What Is To Be Done?***

Nikolai Chernyshevsky wrote his novel *What Is To Be Done?* (1863) while he was

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<sup>19</sup> In his book *Roots of Revolution*, Franco Venturi writes that Chernyshevsky’s attitude towards the arts is best shown in his letter to Nekrasov in September 1856. In this letter, he states that the freedom of the poet is not in “setting arbitrary bounds to his own gifts, but in writing what is in his own mind” (qtd. in Venturi 141). To illustrate his views, Chernyshevsky elaborates: “The poet Fet would be helpless if he tried to write of social problems. This would only lead to nonsense... Gogol was utterly free when he wrote *The Government Inspector*, because it was the nature of his talent that prompted him to do so; whereas Pushkin was not free when, under the influence of the Decembrists, he wrote his *Ode to Freedom*” (qtd. in Venturi 142). After citing this passage from Chernyshevsky’s letter, Venturi adds that Chernyshevsky considered Nekrasov (to whom the letter was written) to be the greatest Russian poet (even greater than Pushkin) merely because Chernyshevsky “found in [Nekrasov’s] poetry sentiments akin to his own and the ability to create a literary world which was similar in many respects to Chernyshevsky’s own political world” (142). Yet it is also worth mentioning that Chernyshevsky’s dissertation on the *Aesthetic Relations between Art and Reality* (1853) was focused on ideas drawn from Feuerbach’s philosophy, rather than on the arts per se (Venturi 142).

<sup>20</sup> “...замѣчательнаго зданія, о которомъ не мо[гут]ъ безъ увлеченія говорить [...] тысяч[и] людей” (Chernyshevskii 81).

incarcerated in the Peter-Paul Fortress for subversive activities against the Government.<sup>21</sup> In his attempts to get his novel published, Chernyshevsky explained to the Official Commission of Inquiry what spurred him to write it:

For a long time I have planned... to apply myself to literature. But I am convinced that people of my character must do this only in their later years... A novel is destined for the greater mass of the public. It is a writer's most serious undertaking, and so it belongs to old age. The frivolity of the form must be compensated for by the solidity of the thought. (Qtd. in Venturi 178)

Evidently, in his response, Chernyshevsky employs Aesopian language. He tries to deceive the police by claiming that such a “serious undertaking” as a novel requires “the solidity of the thought” that one could have achieved only in his later years. What is more, his words might be interpreted as a proof of his real intentions—to convey his ideas by means of fiction since he was not allowed to produce any essays or articles. Nonetheless, such a strategy helped him to receive the authorities’ approval to publish his novel: he persuaded them that it was merely a “family novel” (“семейный роман”), rather than a revolutionary pamphlet (Bogoslovskii *Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevskii*).

If we take a look at the plot of Chernyshevsky’s novel, the reason it successfully passed censorship becomes clear. This is a story about a young, low-middle-class Russian girl named Vera Pavlovna. She is virtuous and talented, but she has to live in a family where she is always being closely monitored by her tyrannical mother who attempts to marry her to

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<sup>21</sup> He was arrested after the Third Section got the letters that Alexander Herzen sent to the revolutionary Nikolai Serno-Solovjevich. In one of these letters Herzen, who lived in London at that time, proposed that Chernyshevsky come and print *The Contemporary* in the British capital. During 1859–1862, in the pages of *The Contemporary*, Chernyshevsky attacked the institution of absolute monarchy, but he could not explicitly criticize Russia, and so he alluded to it by substituting it with Western Europe (Venturi 162–163). Many of his works were devoted to socialism, particularly the economic ideas of the English and French thinkers “from which he tried to derive a comprehensive picture of his [own] ideas on the plane of political economy” (Venturi 164). In his book *Roots of Revolution*, Franco Venturi points out that around 1859 Chernyshevsky had *The Contemporary* under his sole control and thus gave it “the slant he wanted, both in politics and in literature” (156). His propaganda was very effective, as proved by Venturi: “To see this we merely have to look at the circulation of [*The Contemporary*], which grew every year and which eventually reached the remarkable figure of six thousand—far greater than that of all other reviews” (Venturi 168). Venturi also goes on to say that: “Chernyshevsky’s position during his last year of free activity was that of a spiritual guide, the intellectual and political pivot of the forces which were gradually beginning to move with his programme, which was summed up by Dobrolyubov in the phrase ‘Calling Russia to Axes’” (169). It is no surprise that, ever since the fall of 1861, Chernyshevsky had been under observation by the Third Section (Venturi 176).

a wealthy man whom Vera neither loves nor respects. Vera escapes her family and thwarts her mother's plans by marrying the student Lopukhov—a representative of a new type of man. Lopukhov loves and respects Vera and treats her differently than other “typical” Russian husbands treat their wives: he allows her to fully develop her human and social potential (she opens a sewing co-op). In three years, Vera transforms into a real woman and comes to better understand love and her own needs. As a result, she realizes that she does not love Lopukhov and wishes to leave him for his friend Kirsanov. Lopukhov supports her decision and even fakes his own suicide in order to free Vera from their conjugal bonds. Vera Pavlovna is united with her true love Kirsanov, and Lopukhov, in his turn, encounters his soul-mate, Ekaterina Polozova (although this happens only after his return from America).

Although at the first glance it seems that Chernyshevsky, like other Russian liberal writers, promotes the idea of women's emancipation, in fact, he employs the woman question merely as a device to trick censors (Frank, *Through the Russian Prism* 190; Katz, “Vera Pavlovna's Dreams” 151). His true intentions were to portray “the ideas and attitudes of the “new people,”—the younger generation of the 1860s—who presumably lived according to the precepts of Chernyshevsky's own ethical philosophy” (Frank, *Through the Russian Prism* 190). He explained this ethical philosophy in his article “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy” (1860). Essentially, his ethical theory was a “home-brewed Russian amalgam of [British] Benthamine utilitarianism and Utopian socialist idealism (labeled ‘rational egoism’)” (Frank, *Between Religion...* 47). Chernyshevsky believed that good is what is useful, and bad is what is harmful. Thus, there are no good or bad people: one is good when in search of something pleasant for him/herself and doing useful things for others as well, whereas one is bad when what brings pleasure to him/her is harmful to others. Yet, Chernyshevsky claimed that human behavior is determined by the laws of nature. Accordingly, in his view, if social conditions are improved by applying methods that have been developed in accordance with

natural science to human society, all social issues will be resolved and all human beings will be able to satisfy their natural needs. It is no surprise that all of the “good” characters in the novel *What Is To Be Done?* are adherents of this ethical theory and behave accordingly. It is also worth mentioning that Chernyshevsky’s novel is subtitled *Tales about New People*.

Political allegory is another device that Chernyshevsky utilizes in order to trick the censors. The dreams of the main female character in the novel served as a perfect mode of allegorical expression (Katz, “Vera Pavlovna’s Dreams” 151; Skaftymov 124). In total, Vera Pavlovna has four dreams, all of which are interconnected. Together they “constitute a special allegory within the larger framework of an allegorical novel” (Katz, “Vera Pavlovna’s Dreams” 151). It is worth noting that, in outlining the basic structure of Chernyshevsky’s novel, Anatoly Lunacharsky regards the dreams as more significant than the characters (Lunacharsky 70). Grigoriĭ Tamarchenko, in her turn, considers Vera Pavlovna’s fourth dream to be the most important exposition of Chernyshevsky’s ideas in the novel (Tamarchenko 237). It is in this dream that Chernyshevsky evokes the image of the Crystal Palace and canonizes it as a symbol of socialist utopianism (Drozd 157).

In her fourth dream, Vera Pavlovna takes a trip to the megalopolis of the future where the denizens dwell in glass buildings. During her imaginary voyage, she visits two of these glass dwellings. After having looked at one of them, Vera Pavlovna explicitly likens the architecture of this building to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham: “But this building—what on earth is it? What style of architecture? There’s nothing at all like it now. No, there is one building that hints at it—the palace at Sydenham: cast iron and crystal, crystal and cast iron—nothing else” (370).<sup>22</sup> It is significant that this comparison is made at the very beginning of Vera’s dream about her trip to the future, and it is important that Vera Pavlovna associates this

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<sup>22</sup> “Но это здание, – что ж это, какой оно архитектуры? Теперь нет такой; нет, уж есть один намек на нее, – дворец, который стоит на Сайденгамском холме: чугун и стекло, чугун и стекло – только” (Chernyshevskii 283).



building with the new Palace rather than with the original one that was built for the Great Exhibition. As was noted earlier, the reconstructed Crystal Palace was not merely a substitute for the original, and Chernyshevsky was well aware of this. Accordingly, one may suggest that the author intended for his readers to keep the image of the real building (the Crystal Palace at Sydenham) in mind while reading about the glass megalopolis that Vera Pavlovna sees in her fourth dream. Building upon this assumption, I argue that, even though the Crystal Palace is mentioned only once in Chernyshevsky's novel, the imaginary glass world that he created has a lot in common with Paxton's Palace and is in fact derived from it.

Chernyshevsky morphs the Crystal Palace into a rural megalopolis that houses a socialist paradise, where all people are free and equal. It is important to consider why Chernyshevsky chooses this particular image in order to convey his ideas and makes it a symbol of the final revolution that is intended to bring about universal happiness.

This glass megalopolis of the future makes its appearance only in the second part of Vera Pavlovna's dream. Its appearance is preceded by a sequence of three scenes which are linked to distinct stages in the history of humankind and to deities who are associated with each of these stages. Throughout the first part of her dream, Vera Pavlovna is guided by the "radiant beauty," who analyzes and interprets each of the stages in view of the woman question. The first scene in Vera Pavlovna's dream represents the ancient times when goddess Astarte had control over the world; however, as the radiant beauty explains, at that time there was no equality between men and women, because women were regarded as slaves. The second scene is from the time of Aphrodite's reign: at this time women were worshiped as sources of pleasure but were not considered to be equal to men—there was no respect for women as human beings. The third and final scene portrays the kingdom of Chastity: here, a man would worship a woman unless he touched her; after they touched he would stop loving her and she would become his subject.

After showing all of these kingdoms to Vera Pavlovna, the radiant beauty explains that even though all these kingdoms of the past still exist, they are in decline, because “man becomes wiser; more and more, woman strongly perceives herself as a human being equal to him”—now the time of a new deity has arrived, this deity is the radiant beauty herself. This radiant beauty is supposed to replace all the goddesses of the past, because she possesses “all the sensual pleasure that was contained in Astarte,” “all the ecstasy at the contemplation of beauty which was contained in Aphrodite,” and “all the reverence before purity which was contained in Chastity” (367).<sup>23</sup> Besides all these features, she has a “new element which wasn’t present in any of the earlier goddesses”: “[this] new element which distinguishes [her] from all others is ‘equal rights between lovers,’ that is, an equal relationship between them as human beings” (368).<sup>24</sup> For that reason, she calls herself the Goddess of Freedom and Equality.

Even though, at first glance, the second part of the dream seems to concentrate on a theme other than the „woman question“—the society of the future—it is in fact inextricably linked to the first part of Vera Pavlovna’s dream, which begins with the lines from Schiller’s “The Four Ages of The World.” Three ages of humanity are depicted in the first half of the dream (which consists of the introduction and Sections 1–6), whereas the fourth age – the new world order that is soon to come – is portrayed in the second half (Sections 8–11). It is significant that these two parts of the dream are separated by two rows of dots (that constitute the whole of Section 7). As Michael Katz suggests, these dots signify the revolution about which Chernyshevsky could not write openly, but due to which humanity makes a great leap into the age of total liberation of the human spirit. Yet, as was mentioned in the introduction,

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<sup>23</sup> “во мне наслаждение чувства, которое было в Астарте,” “во мне упоение созерцанием красоты, которое было в Афродите,” “во мне благоговение перед чистотою, которое было в ‘Непорочности’” (Chernyshevskii 286).

<sup>24</sup> “это новое в [ней] то, чем [она] отличается от них, – равноправность любящих, равное отношение между ними, как людьми” (Chernyshevskii 286).

the Crystal Palace at Sydenham represents history as an evolutionary sequence spanning from ancient to contemporary industrial society. What is more, in his article on the Crystal Palace, Chernyshevsky underscored that the exhibits displayed at the Palace represented the life, traditions and achievements of previous generations as well as those of modern society. Likewise, the glass megalopolis that Vera Pavlovna visits in her fourth dream is also associated with the idea of evolution: it is pictured as a product of evolution.

It is also important that in the second part of Vera Pavlovna's dream, she and the goddess of Freedom and Equality are joined by the latter's "elder sister," the one who appeared in all of Vera's previous dreams and who introduced herself as "Love of Humanity." In his analysis of Vera Pavlovna's dreams, Katz deems this "elder sister" a symbol of "liberation [that] knows no *national* boundaries," for this maiden is capable of taking on the features of representatives of "a number of West European nations (England, France, Germany) and Eastern ones (Poland and Russia)" (Katz, "Vera Pavlovna's Dreams" 152). Yet it is worth noting that, in his article on the real building, Chernyshevsky underscores the cosmopolitan nature of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham by stating that it was not only built mainly by foreign workers, but also aimed at uniting all the best in the arts of all the nations (82).<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, one may suggest that the glass megalopolis of the future depicted in Vera Pavlovna's fourth dream "inherited the cosmopolitan nature" of its architectural prototype located at Sydenham.

Furthermore, like the reconstructed Paxton's Palace, the glass edifices of the future are a vanguard of progress and modernity. The first one is equipped with steam tables to keep the meals warm and is full of extremely light aluminum furniture. It is noteworthy that aluminum was the most modern material of Chernyshevsky's time: it was first produced in 1854 (Katz, "Vera Pavlovna's Dreams" 158). The second building, in its turn, seems to be even more

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<sup>25</sup> "...служить соединеніемъ всего, что только можетъ быть найдено превосходнѣйшего въ искусствѣ всѣхъ народовъ" (Chernyshevskii 82).

technologically advanced than the first one. First of all, it is built out of aluminum: its columns are made out of this wondrous material. In addition, the entire building is lighted with a powerful electric lamp. Yet, this building is equipped with shade canopies which are enhanced with a sprinkler. As the goddess explains, such a device enables the denizens of the glass edifice to adjust the temperature inside so that it suits them. In this imaginary world of the future, technology makes humans' lives easier. As the radiant beauty underscores, their labor is full of joy because "machines are doing almost all the work for them— reaping, binding the sheaves, and carting them away[—and the] people have only to walk alongside, or ride, or drive the machines" (371).<sup>26</sup> Significantly, both of these buildings seem to inherit some particular features of the real one located at Sydenham. As was mentioned in the introduction, both Crystal Palaces—the original and its reconstruction—were well-ventilated. Moreover, the system employed by the denizens of Chernyshevsky's imaginary glass megalopolis is reminiscent of that used in the real buildings at Hyde Park and Sydenham—a calico awning was drawn across their roofs (Hobhouse 51). Yet, one may suggest that the steam tables with which the first glass building that Vera Pavlovna visits is equipped are evocative of the enormous steam apparatus that Chernyshevsky described in his article on the real Sydenham Palace. He wrote that this device was intended to keep the entire building warm during the winter time (83).<sup>27</sup>

Yet, like its architectural prototype, Chernyshevsky's glass world is not only highly technological, but also emphatically rural. It is replete with lush vegetation. The first building is surrounded by wheat fields and a garden. Vera Pavlovna is astounded by what she sees

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<sup>26</sup> "Почти все делают за них машины, — и жнут, и вяжут снопы, и отвозят их, — люди почти только ходят, ездят, управляют машинами" (Chernyshevskii 283).

<sup>27</sup> "Отлогость возвышенія довольно-крута; поэтому съ одного изъ двухъ длинныхъ фасадовъ, обращенныхъ подъ-гору, понадобилось сдѣлать высокій каменный фундаментъ, образуемый рядомъ колоннъ. Фундаментомъ воспользовались для того, чтобъ сдѣлать въ немъ очень-высокій подвальный этажъ, называющійся теперь 'Пакстоновымъ Тонелемъ;' онъ идетъ во всю длину зданія, и въ немъ помѣщается громаднѣйшій паровой аппаратъ для нагрѣванія всего зданія въ холодное время" (Chernyshevskii 83).

there: “Now such ears and kernels can be grown only in greenhouses. The fields are our fields, but now such blossoms can be seen only in flower gardens. The orchards are full of lemons and orange trees, peach and apricot—how can they grow in the fresh air? Oh, there are columns surrounding them...” (370).<sup>28</sup> In fact, this enormous glass edifice is a huge greenhouse just like the real Sydenham Palace.

In his article of 1854, Chernyshevsky underlines that the most spectacular part of this venue are the gardens that surround it. He mentions that the specialty of the creator of the Crystal Palace, Joseph Paxton, was gardening and landscape design. What is more, the very idea of the Crystal Palace was derived from Paxton’s “previous invention— an enormous glass greenhouse with a swimming pool inside, in which a gigantic *Victoria-Regia* blossomed” (94).<sup>29</sup> As Chernyshevsky writes in his article, this greenhouse was a great spectacle: the flower that it housed measured nearly a meter in diameter, and its leaves were over two meters in length. Chernyshevsky adds that the Sydenham gardens were even greater in “dignity and beauty” (“величии и красоте”): “The variety of landscape, rich with cascades and consisting of ever-changing hills and valleys, was best suited to the plans of the designer. The Sydenham gardens that stretched over several miles should have been something outstandingly glorious and beautiful, according to the reviews of experts” (94).<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, one may assume that Paxton’s prowess as a gardener might have served as a source of inspiration for Chernyshevsky when he was creating his imaginary Crystal Palace

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<sup>28</sup> “Только в оранжерее можно бы теперь вырастить такие колосья с такими зернами. Поля, это наши поля; но такие цветы теперь только в цветниках у нас. Сады, лимонные и апельсиновые деревья, персики и абрикосы, – как же они растут на открытом воздухе? О, да это колонны вокруг них...” (Chernyshevskii 287).

<sup>29</sup> “...прежнимъ его изобрѣтеніемъ огромной стеклянной теплицы для бассейна, въ которомъ цвѣла гигантская *Victoria-Regia*” (Chernyshevskii 94).

<sup>30</sup> “Разнообразіе мѣстности, обильной каскадами и состоящей изъ беспрестанно-смѣняющихся холмовъ и долинъ, какъ-нельзя-лучше благопріятствовало планамъ строителя, и сейденгэмскіе сады, занимающіе нѣсколько верстъ, должны быть, по отзывамъ знатоковъ, чѣмъ-то невиданно-величественнымъ и прекраснымъ” (Chernyshevskii 94).

in *What Is To Be Done?*

Indeed, on a philosophical plane, the theme of agriculture and good gardening is integral to Chernyshevsky's novel. In Vera Pavlovna's second dream, the soil and grain stand for the social environment of contemporary Russia and people who are being brought up in such conditions. The entire second dream is set in the field, where Vera Pavlovna's first husband (Lopukhov) and his friend (Mertsalov) are walking and discussing why one sort of dirt produces the good, pure, delicate wheat, whereas another sort does not. Mertsalov accounts for this phenomenon in terms of "the language of their philosophy," materialism: he identifies the dirt that is composed of healthy elements as "real" soil, and he terms the dirt that consists of unhealthy, rotten elements, "fantastic" soil. He elaborates on this observation by pointing out that "real" soil belongs to the part of the field that is equipped with an outlet for water, the presence of which prevents this part of the field from being susceptible to putridity. On the other hand, the part of the field that is composed only of "fantastic" soil is deprived of such an outlet and, as a result, the water here stagnates and produces rot. The static quality of this water is worth noting, since according to Mertsalov, motion is reality and thus is life, because, as he claims, "reality and life are one and the same" (181).<sup>31</sup>

He also asserts that "life has as its main element labor; consequently, the main element of reality is labor, and the truest sign of reality is activity" (181).<sup>32</sup> Later on, he also adds that "the absence of movement is the absence of labor, [...] [for] labor [...] [is] the fundamental form of movement which provides the basis and content of all other forms: recreation, relaxation, amusement, enjoyment[;] [w]ithout labor to precede them, these other forms have no reality" (182).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> "...реальность и жизнь одно и то же" (Chernyshevskii 123).

<sup>32</sup> "...жизнь имеет главным своим элементом труд, а потому главный элемент реальности – труд, и самый верный признак реальности – деятельность" (Chernyshevskii 123).

<sup>33</sup> "...отсутствие движения есть отсутствие труда, [...] потому что труд представляется в

Significantly, this idea corresponds with the idea expressed in Vera Pavlovna's first dream in which she first sees herself shut up and paralyzed in a dark, damp cellar. Then, after having been delivered and cured, she finds herself joyfully running around in a field. This is an allegorical depiction of both her present and her near future: living with her family and being without labor, Vera Pavlovna is enslaved and deprived of motion, whereas when she begins her life with Lopukhov, she gets an opportunity to work and freely express herself in a new social sphere. Moreover, the wheat field becomes a recurring symbol of labor and personal freedom—two concepts that are inextricably linked in Chernyshevsky's novel. Accordingly, it is not surprising that, in Vera Pavlovna's fourth dream, the "crystal" megalopolis of the future is located in the middle of a wheat field, which is accompanied by an exotic orchard. It is also important to note that the main occupation of its denizens is related to agriculture: every day they work in the field. Thus, the unification of labor and freedom is one of the foundations of this "crystal" world of the future, where there is only fertile soil and open space in which everyone can move freely.

Nonetheless, according to the goddess, it is once the 'crystal' world has been erected, that everyone became free and able to achieve happiness: "...every kind of happiness exists here, whatever anyone desires. Everyone lives as he wants; each and every person has complete will, yes, free will" (378).<sup>34</sup> From this perspective, the fact that the wheat fields and garden are only a part of the glass megalopolis seems to be an important detail: before the erection of this "crystal" world, there was a desert in its stead. Yet, from the words of the goddess it is evident that happiness is equated with abundance and the satisfaction of all human desires. There is no poverty and suffering in this blossoming glass world.

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антропологическом анализе коренною формою движения, дающего основание и содержание всем другим формам: развлечению, отдыху, забаве, веселью; они без предшествующего труда не имеют реальности" (Chernyshevskii 124).

<sup>34</sup> "...здесь всякое счастье, какое кому надобно. Здесь все живут, как лучше кому жить, здесь всем и каждому — полная воля, вольная воля" (Chernyshevskii 286).

Such a conception of universal happiness was offered by Chernyshevsky in his article “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy” (1860) that, as was noted earlier, is considered to be a key to understanding *What Is To Be Done?*. He writes that the cause of everything bad in the world is the shortage of the articles that one needs in order to satisfy one’s basic needs such as breathing, eating, and drinking. He claims that “...if [...] [f]or example, [...] a large number of people are locked in a stifling room with one window, quarrels and strife nearly always arise, and even murder may be committed for a place near that window” (101).<sup>35</sup>

Significantly, such an issue is impossible in Chernyshevsky’s megalopolis of the future since it is made almost entirely of glass (and therefore no one must grapple for “a place near a window”). Yet, the “airy” architecture of this real Palace is among the features that Chernyshevsky extolled in his article “News on Literature, Art, Science and Industry.” As he pointed out: “...it is especially attractive from the distance: the bluish hue of the glass merges with the color of the sky, and the palace appears as a magical castle in the air” (84).<sup>36</sup>

In addition, even though the first building that Vera Pavlovna observes and likens to the real Crystal Palace is actually just a protective case for another one located inside it, the inner building also resembles the “airy” architecture of Sydenham Palace:

What graceful architecture in the inner house! What narrow spaces between the windows! The windows themselves are huge, wide, and stretch the entire height of each floor! The stone walls look like a row of pilasters that form a frame for these windows looking out onto the galleries. [...] Aluminum and more aluminum; all the spaces between the windows are hung with huge mirrors. (370)<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> “...если, [...] например, [...] много людей будет заперто в душном помещении с одним окном, то почти всегда возникают ссоры и драки, могут даже совершаться убийства из-за приобретения места у этого окна” (Chernyshevskii 196).

<sup>36</sup> “...особенно поразителен его видъ издали: синеватый оттѣнокъ стекла сливается съ цвѣтомъ неба и дворецъ представляется волшебнымъ полувоздушнымъ замкомъ” (Chernyshevskii 84).

<sup>37</sup> “Какая легкая архитектура этого внутреннего дома, какие маленькие простенки между окнами, – а окна огромные, широкие, во всю высоту этажей! Его каменные стены – будто ряд пилястров, составляющих раму для окон, которые выходят на галерею. [...] Везде алюминий и алюминий, и все промежутки окон одеты огромными зеркалами” (Chernyshevskii 283).



Although the walls of this inner building are made of bricks, the entire building seems to be composed of air, thus producing the impression that it is levitating. Such an effect is the result of an extensive use of mirrors and a great number of windows in the building's design. In addition, this airy palace, which houses free and equal people, strikingly contrasts with the dark, damp cellar, in which Vera Pavlovna finds herself imprisoned in her first dream. Thus, it is no surprise that the erection of such an airy "crystal" world constitutes complete freedom: "...each and every person has complete will, yes, free will" (378).<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, in "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," Chernyshevsky asserts that lack of food and drink occurs more frequently than lack of air (for air is usually accessible in abundance to everyone), and therefore lack of sustenance might be considered to be the main cause of all bad in the world (101). Accordingly, he is convinced that if "this one cause of evil were abolished, at least nine tenths of all [...] bad in human society would quickly disappear" (101).<sup>39</sup> Yet, he maintains that while the abolishment of famine and thirst was once hard to achieve, its eradication is now possible due to "the present state of mechanics and chemistry." (102). He explains that "with the means with which these sciences provide agriculture, [...] land in every country in the temperate zone could provide ever so much more food than is needed for an abundant supply of provisions for populations ten and twenty times larger than the present populations of these countries" (102).<sup>40</sup> To illustrate this point, he refers to England:

In England, the land could feed at least 150,000,000 people. The panegyrics sung in

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<sup>38</sup> "...здесь всякое счастье, какое кому надобно. Здесь все живут, как лучше кому жить, здесь всем и каждому – полная воля, вольная воля" (Chernyshevskii 286).

<sup>39</sup> "...если бы устранить одну эту причину зла, быстро исчезло бы из человеческого общества, по крайней мере, девять десятых всего дурного" (Chernyshevskii 196).

<sup>40</sup> "...при средствах, даваемых этими науками сельскому хозяйству, земля могла бы производить в каждой стране умеренного пояса несравненно больше пищи, чем сколько нужно для изобильного продовольствия числа жителей, в десять и двадцать раз большего, чем нынешнее население этой страны" (Chernyshevskii 196).

praise of the astonishing perfection of English agriculture are justified insofar as rapid improvements are taking place there, but it would be a mistake to think that the resources of science are already being employed on a sufficiently wide scale. This is only just the beginning, and nine tenths of the cultivated land in England is still tilled by routine methods that in no way correspond to the present state of agricultural knowledge. (102)<sup>41</sup>

Even though, on the one hand, Chernyshevsky states that even in England the resources of science are not “employed on a sufficiently wide scale,” on the other hand, he underscores that “this is only just the beginning” (102). It is also worth noting that this example is not incorporated into the text of his article: it is an authorial footnote—the only one to be found in the 100-page article. It is as if, by putting this information in a footnote, Chernyshevsky intentionally tries to draw his readers’ attention to it and hint at the direction Russia should take in order to make a great leap in its economic development. Such an interpretation is possible due to the fact that, at the very end of this article, Chernyshevsky alludes to Russia and its fate.<sup>42</sup> He expresses the hope that Russians would become good

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<sup>41</sup> “В самой Англии земля может прокормить, по крайней мере, 150 000 000 человек. Панегирики удивительному совершенству английского сельского хозяйства справедливы в том отношении, что дело это там быстро улучшается; но ошибочно было бы думать, что оно и теперь пользуется в удовлетворительном размере пособиями науки: это только что еще начинается, и девять десятых частей земли, возделываемой в Англии, возделывается по рутине, совершенно не соответствующей нынешнему состоянию сельскохозяйственных знаний” (Chernyshevskii 196).

<sup>42</sup> It is also worth mentioning that, later in this article, Chernyshevsky overtly compares England to Russia. He suggests to “superficially survey” the lives of the British and the Yakuts as representatives of two countries that are very remote from each other in terms of their development: one inhabited by “a highly civilized nation,” another by “savages” (109). He compares London to pit dwellings dug by the Yakuts, and Manchester’s cotton mills to the Yakuts’ practice of sewing animal skins with a needle. He concludes his “superficial survey” by saying that the work and housing of the Yakuts are merely an embryo of that of British London and Manchester. London arose from a group of pit dwellings, whereas Manchester’s spindles are the next step after the needle—the only difference is the degree to which “a certain phenomenon is developed in a certain place” (110). Accordingly, in Chernyshevsky’s view, “phenomena of all categories in various degrees of development exist among all nations.” However, although the embryo is the same and it develops in accordance with the same laws everywhere, the difference in development occurs merely due to the different environments in different places: for example, the Berlin grapes and those of Tokay have the very same elements, but the former “is fit for nothing,” whereas “splendid wines are made” from the latter (110). Even though Chernyshevsky switches to Germany and Hungary at the end, the main part of his argument is based on the straightforward comparison between England and the Russian Empire (for the Yakuts live within its expanses). What is more, towards the end of his article Chernyshevsky also points out:

Science deals with nations, not with an individual man; with man, not with a Frenchman or Englishman, not with the merchant or the bureaucrat. Science recognizes as truth only that which constitutes human nature. Only that which is useful to man in general is regarded as true good. All digressions from this norm in the conceptions of a given nation, or class, are a mistake, a hallucination, which may cause much harm to many people, but most of all to that nation, or class, which falls into

“husbandmen” of their land in the future. Moreover, he is certain that “external nature presents no obstacles to supplying the entire population of every civilized country with an abundance of food; the only task that remains is to make people conscious of the possibility and necessity of energetically striving towards this goal” (102).<sup>43</sup>

Significantly, Vera Pavlovna’s fourth dream not only aims to showcase the ideal society of the future, but also to reveal the secret of how to successfully create such a society. As the radiant beauty explains, the people of the future achieved this state only after they had realized their true interests and had started to behave in accordance with them. They voluntarily turned a desert into an orchard and erected all of these glass edifices after the radiant goddess proved to them that such a project would be in their best interest. As she explains, it was an easy task for them, because they grew smarter and realized that, metaphorically speaking, life in a greenhouse is more advantageous and pleasant for them: “People merely became more intelligent and began to turn to their own advantage the tremendous means and resources that one had been wasted or used counterproductively” (375).<sup>44</sup> Thus, they did exactly what Chernyshevsky called for in his article on the anthropological principle.

It is no surprise that this glass megalopolis, surrounded by an exotic orchard and wheat fields, is called “New Russia.” It is worth noting, however, that only the second building is referred to in this way (even though the first one is located in Russia), and it is

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this error by adopting, through its own fault, or that of others, a position among other nations, or classes, that makes it think that what is detrimental to mankind in general is beneficial for itself. ‘Perish like the Avers’ – history repeats these words over every nation and every class that is overcome by the fatal hallucination that its interests clash with the interests of mankind in general. (128)

<sup>43</sup> “Таким образом, со стороны внешней природы уже не представляется никакого препятствия к снабжению всего населения каждой цивилизованной страны изобильною пищею; задача остается только в том, чтобы люди сознали возможность и надобность энергически устремиться к этой цели” (Chernyshevskii 196).

<sup>44</sup> “Они только стали умны, стали обращать на пользу себе громадное количество сил и средств, которые прежде тратили без пользы или и прямо во вред себе” (Chernyshevskii 287).

only when the goddess is presenting it to Vera Pavlovna. In fact, she offers a recipe for how to thrive that repeats Chernyshevsky's instructions (in his 1860 article) almost verbatim. This could be explained by the fact that the second building represents the "distant" future, whereas the first is linked to the "near" future (Katz, "Vera Pavlovna's Dreams..." 155, Drozd 167). Yet, the first building is explicitly linked with the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, whereas the second is not, even though it is definitely derivative of Paxton's creation as well. As Chernyshevsky wrote in his article (right after his footnote on the state of agriculture in England), "...not a single human society has, as yet, adopted on any extensive scale, the means indicated by the natural sciences and the science of public welfare for the promotion of agriculture" (102).<sup>45</sup> In addition, as was mentioned earlier, he indicates that the state of agriculture in England is "just only the beginning" of this process. Thus, by taking as a model the real building located in the country that exemplifies an embryo of thriving agriculture, Chernyshevsky creates a vivid picture of the future that he aspired to bring to Russia in the pages of *What Is To Be Done?*.

Furthermore, in the fourth dream of Vera Pavlovna, the radiant beauty claims that by having started her business, Vera Pavlovna proved that "people can live freely"<sup>46</sup> even in her time. To do so they simply need "to be rational, to know how to organize [their life properly], and to learn how to use [their] resources most advantageously" (376).<sup>47</sup> By pointing this out, the goddess draws a parallel between the "crystal" world of the future and Vera Pavlovna's cooperative. Indeed, Vera Pavlovna's co-op has a lot in common with the glass world that emerges in her fourth dream.

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<sup>45</sup> "В действительности еще ни одно человеческое общество не приняло в сколько-нибудь обширном размере тех средств, какие указываются для придания успешности сельскому хозяйству естественными науками и наукою о народном благосостоянии" (Chernyshevskii 197).

<sup>46</sup> "люди могут жить очень привольно" (Chernyshevskii 287).

<sup>47</sup> "быть рассудительными, уметь хорошо устроиться, узнать, как выгоднее употреблять средства" (Chernyshevskii 287).

First of all, it is not merely a profitable private enterprise, but a commune in which people live and work together. The co-op is based on the idea that it is in everybody's interest to equally split their profit without regard to one's skills or degree of responsibility. Later on, driven by the very same socialist economic logic, the girls who work at the co-op decide to live together, because it is more profitable to share food and housing with others than it is to live alone. It is also noteworthy that when Vera Pavlovna decided to set up this co-op, she was driven by the desire to try out the system she had encountered in the Socialist books, many of which she had read by that time:

Many good, clever people have written books on the subject of how one should live on this earth so that all people may be happy. According to them, the most important thing is to organize workshops according to a new system. I'd like to see if together we can establish the new system they prescribe. It's the same as wanting to build a fine house, plant a nice garden, or erect a greenhouse for one's own enjoyment. I want to organize a nice sewing shop so that I may enjoy it. (190)<sup>48</sup>

Here she refers to the books shared with her by her first husband, the progressive young man Lopukhov. These were works by such utopian Socialists as Charles Fourier, Victor Considerant, and Robert Owen (Katz in Chernyshevsky 191). Thus, it is no surprise that Vera's co-op transforms into a full-fledged Fourierist phalanstery, even though only unmarried girls and their families live there. In explaining her motives to establish this co-op, she mentions that "to organize a nice sewing workshop" is the same as "to build a fine house, plant a nice garden, or erect a greenhouse" (190). One may assume that by placing Vera's workshop and the key words that define the glass megalopolis of the future side-by-side, Chernyshevsky seems to make Vera Pavlovna draw an implicit parallel between her co-op and the "crystal" world of the future, thus anticipating the vision that emerges in her fourth

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<sup>48</sup> "Добрые и умные люди написали много книг о том, как надобно жить на свете, чтобы всем было хорошо; и тут самое главное, — говорят они, — в том, чтобы мастерские завести по новому порядку. Вот мне и хочется посмотреть, сумеем ли мы с вами завести такой порядок, какой нужно. Это все равно, как иному хочется выстроить хороший дом, другому — развести хороший сад или оранжерею, чтобы на них любоваться; так вот мне хочется завести хорошую швейную мастерскую, чтобы весело было любоваться на нее" (Chernyshevskii 132).

dream. In a similar vein, the “crystal” megalopolis that Chernyshevsky depicted in Vera Pavlovna’s fourth dream is reminiscent of a phalanstery (as noted by Frank, Tamarchenko, Katz, and Paperno).

In the crystal palace of the future, the old men and women and the children who don’t work in the fields are in charge of maintaining the whole palace and preparing meals. The radiant beauty explains: “To prepare food, do the housework, clean the rooms—this work is too easy for other hands” (372).<sup>49</sup> Likewise, in Vera Pavlovna’s co-op, the elderly clean rooms and cook and serve meals. The dishes on the menu in both the real and imaginary communes are quite unusual and expensive. After Vera Pavlovna witnesses what the denizens of the crystal palace have for lunch, she has to admit that she can afford such a meal only “several times a year” (372).<sup>50</sup> In response, the radiant beauty explains that “here this is regular fare [...]. What everyone can afford together is provided free; but a charge is made for any special item or whim” (372).<sup>51</sup> Similarly, after having visited Vera Pavlovna’s communal sewing workshop and sharing the food served for the workers there, a future owner of a similar co-op, Ekaterina Polozova, confesses to her friend that “the meal was so good that [she] ate with gusto and wouldn’t ha[ve] considered it a great deprivation to exist on such fare” (even though she has a very fine chef at her own home) (382).<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, although Vera Pavlovna’s imaginary communal dwelling is replete with rather luxurious and cutting-edge objects (carpets, aluminum furniture, steam tables) rather than objects that are merely expensive or of good quality, its interior is reminiscent of the

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<sup>49</sup> “...готовить кушанье, заниматься хозяйством, прибирать в комнатах – это слишком легкая работа для других рук” (Chernyshevskii 289).

<sup>50</sup> “Несколько раз в год” (Chernyshevskii 289).

<sup>51</sup> “У них это обыкновенный [...] то, что могут по средствам своей компании все, за то нет расчетов; за каждую особую вещь или прихоть – расчет” (Chernyshevskii 289).

<sup>52</sup> “Обед был настолько хорош, что [она] поела со вкусом и не почла бы большим лишением жить на таком обеде” (Chernyshevskii 298).

interior of Vera Pavlovna's co-op dormitory. As Ekaterina Polozova portrays it, the sewing workshop and the workers' rooms are full of low cost, but very well made furniture: "The furniture in these rooms was very presentable, all made of mahogany or walnut. Some rooms have full-length mirrors, others have very nice pier glasses" (382).<sup>53</sup> As a result, the whole living area resembles "rooms in the apartments of middle-level officials, senior department heads, or young section heads who will soon become department heads" (382).<sup>54</sup> In addition, the girls who work and live in Vera Pavlovna's co-op seem "to be dressed like the daughters, sisters, or young wives of these same officials" (382).<sup>55</sup> They wear silk and muslin dresses on a regular basis. Similarly, from Vera Pavlovna's perspective, the dwellings in which the people live in her fourth dream resemble magnificent palaces, whereas these people's ordinary clothes are akin to dresses and tailcoats, which people of her time only wear when they are attending a ball or a concert at the theater.

Another feature that Vera Pavlovna's co-op has in common with her imaginary crystal palaces, is the level of moral and educational development of its denizens. As Ekaterina Polozova points out, the faces of the girls who work at the co-op reflect "the gentleness and tenderness that can come only from a life of contentment" (382).<sup>56</sup> Moreover, this "gentleness" is not a deceptive impression created by their good clothes, food, and living conditions, but rather a projection of their inner life. After a short examination Ekaterina Polozova comes to the conclusion that these girls' level of education is equal to that of a young lady who belongs to a higher social stratum. This is not surprising, since Vera Pavlovna's co-op is not merely a commercial enterprise, but an educational establishment. In

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<sup>53</sup> "меблировка этих комнат тоже очень порядочная, красного дерева или ореховая; в некоторых есть стоячие зеркала, в других – очень хорошие трюмо" (Chernyshevskii 297).

<sup>54</sup> "как в квартирах чиновничьих семейств средней руки, в семействах старых начальников отделения или молодых столоначальников, которые скоро будут начальниками отделения" (Chernyshevskii 297).

<sup>55</sup> "одеты, как дочери, сестры, молодые жены этих чиновников" (Chernyshevskii 297).

<sup>56</sup> "мягкость и нежность, которая развивается только от жизни в довольстве" (Chernyshevskii 297).

the beginning, Vera Pavlovna and other girls simply read books out loud during working hours; then, she realizes that she might give lectures on history, the arts, and other subjects in order to educate her employees who come from low-class families. Finally, she hires several teachers—her own friends from middle and high social strata, and together they run this cooperative that rather resembles an institute for noblewomen. For that reason, one may claim that the co-op is aligned with the Crystal Palace at Sydenham that inspired Chernyshevsky's glass world: even though the Palace was an “interactive” museum rather than a university, it was conceived as an educational establishment created in order to enlighten representatives of low classes and instill in them an appreciation for modernization in general and modern technological achievements in particular. This educational aspect was one of the main features of the glass edifice that Chernyshevsky extolled in his article of 1854.

Likewise, in Vera Pavlovna's fourth dream, the radiant beauty underscores the importance of the intellectual and emotional development of the people of the future for the common good of the entire “crystal” megalopolis. She claims: “In the early days it was hard for people to understand what was good for them, for then they were primitive, mindless, coarse and cruel. But I taught them wisdom. And when they finally came to their senses, it wasn't hard for them to achieve it” (373).<sup>57</sup> The goddess explains that, on the one hand, suffering and poverty are the main enemies of happiness: they prevent workers from enjoying life; on the other hand, the people of the higher social stratum also suffer but their anxiety stems from a lack of the healthy energy enjoyed by the working classes. Consequently, even well-educated and wealthy people are unable to reach a state of “pure” happiness.

A corresponding idea was expressed in Vera Pavlovna's second dream, in which the

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<sup>57</sup> “Трудно было людям только понять, что полезно, они были в твое время еще такими дикарями, такими грубыми, жестокими, безрассудными, но я учила и учила их; а когда они стали понимать, исполнять было уже не трудно” (Chernyshevskii 287).



theoretical discussion about qualities of soil is followed by the confessions of the characters of Chernyshevsky's novel. These confessions seem to illustrate Mertsalov's theory: each human being is a grain of wheat, and his/her family is his soil. When Mertsalov speaks about his family, he underlines that his mother and father experienced *real* happiness and *real* sorrow:

My mother got angry very often, and sometimes beat me, but [...] it was because of excessive nervous fatigue occasioned by wearing and ceaseless labor. And when, with all that, "the two ends did not meet," as she expressed it,—that is, when there was no money with which to buy boots for her sons and shoes for her daughters,—then it was that she beat us. She caressed us also when, though children, we offered to help her, or when we did something intelligent, or when she got a rare moment of rest and her back became limber, as she said. To us those were real joys... (147)<sup>58</sup>

He identifies the main cause of their sorrows as "excessive labor." On the contrary, the confession of Serge, the one who does nothing but escort his mistress, Julie, "wherever she wishes to go" (147), is an example of a grain of wheat produced by the inferior ("fantastic") soil. It is noteworthy that even though his family was rich, they were not exempt from being anxious about their children and money. However, Mertsalov interrupts him and draws a parallel between Serge's story and his own theory:

...we know your history; care of the superfluous, preoccupation with the useless. That is the soil out of which you have grown; it is an abnormal soil. Just look at yourself; you are by birth a very intelligent and very polite man; perhaps you are no worse or more stupid than we are; but what are you good for? (147)<sup>59</sup>

Whereas Mertsalov's family endures sorrow brought on by "excessive labor," Serge's family suffers from anxiety caused by lack of labor.

While Mertsalov does not offer a remedy for either of these issues, the radiant beauty

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<sup>58</sup> "Моя мать часто сердилась, иногда бивала меня, но [...] это — реальное раздражение нерв чрезмерною работою без отдыха; и когда, при всем этом, 'концы не сходились,' как она говорила, то есть не хватало денег на покупку сапог кому-нибудь из нас, братьев, или на башмаки сестрам, — тогда она бивала нас. Она и ласкала нас, когда мы, хоть глупенькие дети, сами вызывались помогать ей в работе, или когда мы делали что-нибудь другое умное, или когда выдавалась ей редкая минута отдохнуть, и ее 'поясницу отпускало,' как она говорила, — это все реальные радости..." (Chernyshevskii 125).

<sup>59</sup> "...мы знаем вашу историю; заботы об излишнем, мысли о ненужном — вот почва, на которой вы выросли; эта почва фантастическая. Потому, посмотрите вы на себя: вы от природы человек и не глупый, и очень хороший, быть может, не хуже и не глупее нас, а к чему же вы пригодны, на что вы полезны?" (Chernyshevskii 126).

who appears in Vera Pavlovna's fourth dream finds a solution. She suggests that the poor workers should be redeemed for their labor with comfort, and educated in order to become more delicate and sensitive to the world around them. The rich nobles, on the other hand, should work in order to acquire the energy of the workers and become stronger. Her theory proves to be viable, as is shown in Vera Pavlovna's fourth dream: those who live in the glass dwellings have undergone such a transformation. They represent a new type of man: sensitive and energetic, strong and educated. As a result, they are morally and physically prepared to embrace happiness and celebrate the fact of being alive:

Here they [...] have strong constitutions [like our working people], but these people are cultured and sensitive. They, however, have something which we do not, for it comes only with hard physical labour and sound health, and that is a powerful and healthy thirst for pleasure. This is joined to all the delicacy of feelings we know now. They have both our morality and culture, and the strength and energy of working people. One can easily understand why their joys, passions and festivities are so much fuller and livelier than ours. What happy people! (378)<sup>60</sup>

It is not surprising that the scene concerning labor is followed by a scene that concerns leisure. Unlike the diurnal scene of joyful labor, the scene of leisure takes place in the evening. The entire building is illuminated by electric light. Some of its denizens rejoice in singing and dancing, whereas others choose to spend time in a different way: at the library or at any other recreational facility in this rural glass megalopolis. At the same time, some of the couples who are dancing in the crystal palace keep disappearing and then reappearing “with glowing cheeks and shining eyes” after having visited rooms where “curtained doors and thick carpets absorb every sound” (378).<sup>61</sup> This final scene of Vera Pavlovna's fourth dream raises a number of questions. After having read *What Is To Be Done?*, Alexander

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<sup>60</sup> “...здесь: нервы и крепки, как у наших рабочих людей, и развиты, впечатлительны, как у нас; приготовленность к веселью, здоровая, сильная жажда его, какой нет у нас, какая дается только могучим здоровьем и физическим трудом, в этих людях соединяется со всею тонкостью ощущений, какая есть в нас; они имеют все наше нравственное развитие вместе с физическим развитием крепких наших рабочих людей: понятно, что их веселье, что их наслаждение, их страсть – все живее и сильнее, шире и сластнее, чем у нас. Счастливые люди!” (Chernyshevskii 288).

<sup>61</sup> “...занавесы дверей, роскошные ковры, поглощающие звук...” (Chernyshevskii 294).

Herzen wrote in his letter to a poet and political activist Nikolai Ogaryov: “It ends in a phalanstery, [a] brothel; which is so bold. But, my God, what a style...” (qtd. in Kovtun 1047). The twentieth-century Chernyshevsky scholar, Richard Stites, interprets this scene as a paragon of Chernyshevsky’s “sensitive appreciation of amorous eroticism” (Stites 96). In the context of the novel, the latter seems to be closer to Chernyshevsky’s idea. Yet, it is worth noting that such a depiction of the life in a commune is aligned with that offered by Fourier.

As Irina Paperno explains:

Fourier’s ideas were presaged in the eighteenth-century utopian novels that came into fashion after the discovery of the so-called Blessed Isles of the South Seas. Set in a climate that, on the one hand, made hard work unnecessary and provided leisure and, on the other, stimulated passion, these utopias concentrated on the arrangement of sexual relations. (Paperno 151)

Paperno suggests that “it was probably through this tradition that the association of warm climates and exotic places with sexual fulfillment became implanted in Chernyshevsky’s consciousness” (Paperno 151). It is interesting that the second building, where the scene of leisure takes place, is located in the south. In addition, as was mentioned earlier, it is explicitly stated that this building is surrounded by an exotic orchard as well as wheat fields. Significantly, in his article on the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, Chernyshevsky not only pays special attention to its gardens, but also mentions some rare exotic trees and flowers (such as palms and a giant-rose *Victoria-regia*) that are planted there. Thus, this particular feature of the British spectacle also served as a source of inspiration for Chernyshevsky and was imbued by him with a specific symbolic meaning.

Even though the final scene of the future life may be reminiscent of a brothel, Chernyshevsky in fact aimed to create a more elevated image. The goddess who serves as Vera Pavlovna’s guide, explains that what happens in these rooms is a mystery—a manifestation of true love. She claims that she reigns over this new life: “Everything is done for my sake! Work equals replenishment of feeling and strength for me; enjoyment equals

preparation for me, relaxation after me. I constitute the purpose of life here; I am all of life” (378).<sup>62</sup> Although it is clear that what the goddess terms as “mystery” is apparently carnal joy, it is not meant to be considered lurid within the context of Chernyshevsky’s novel. At the beginning of the voyage to the future, the goddess tells Vera Pavlovna: “My chastity is purer than that of Chastity, who spoke only about purity of the body. I possess purity of heart. I’m free because in me there’s neither deceit nor pretense. I say no word that I don’t feel. I bestow no kiss barren of love” (368).<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, when the radiant beauty allows Vera Pavlovna to look at her face, it is clear that this beautiful goddess of Freedom and Equality is Vera Pavlovna herself: “...this was her very own face, glowing with the radiance of love, lovelier than all the ideals bequeathed to us by the great sculptors of antiquity and the great artists of the golden age of painting. Yes, it was herself, but glowing with the radiance of love” (367).<sup>64</sup> The goddess accounts for this by saying to Vera Pavlovna: “In me you behold yourself as you are seen by the one who loves you. For his sake I merge with you” (367).<sup>65</sup> Significantly, this goddess appears only in Vera Pavlovna’s fourth dream. It is as if she is superseding the “bride” whom Vera Pavlovna met in her dreams before her marriage to Kirsanov. Even though this goddess is similar to the “bride” of Vera Pavlovna previous visions, she cannot be understood in the same way. Although the “bride” was capable of mirroring the nationality and emotional state of those with whom she interacted, she only reflected Vera Pavlovna’s inner-self. On the

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<sup>62</sup> “Здесь все для меня! Труд – заготовление свежести чувств и сил для меня, веселье – приготовление ко мне, отдых после меня. Здесь я – цель жизни, здесь я – вся жизнь” (Chernyshevskii 294).

<sup>63</sup> “Моя непорочность чище той ‘Непорочности,’ которая говорила только о чистоте тела: во мне чистота сердца. Я свободна, потому во мне нет обмана, нет притворства: я не скажу слова, которого не чувствую, я не дам поцелуя, в котором нет симпатии” (Chernyshevskii 286).

<sup>64</sup> “...это её лицо, озаренное сиянием любви, прекраснее всех идеалов, завещанных нам скульпторами древности и великими живописцами великого века живописи, да, это она сама, но озаренная сиянием любви...” (Chernyshevskii 285).

<sup>65</sup> “Во мне ты видишь себя такой, какою видит тебя тот, кто любит тебя. Для него я сливаюсь с тобою” (Chernyshevskii 285).

contrary, the maiden from the fourth dream merges with Vera Pavlovna. After having united with Kirsanov, Vera Pavlovna realizes her full potential as a woman, whereas with Lopukhov she could only express herself in a social sphere through her work at her sewing co-op. Although Lopukhov delivered her from the “dark, damp cellar” of her family, the only place where she was welcomed by him was a field—a symbol of labor and social activity. Thus, during the time of her first marriage, she was not completely free.

Moreover, after Vera Pavlovna and Kirsanov get married, they both undergo some mysterious transformation. Vera Pavlovna not only becomes more attractive, but also decides to enter a traditionally male community as an equal: she begins her study of medicine. Kirsanov, in his turn, is full of vigor and embarks on reorganizing “one entire important branch of science, the theory of the function of the nervous system” (356).<sup>66</sup> Moreover, as he admits, it is their love that “gives [his] nerves a strong, constant, healthy stimulus that inevitably leads to the development of [his] entire nervous system” and, “therefore, both [his] intellectual and moral strength grow as a result of [his] love” (356).<sup>67</sup> Accordingly, they are akin to the people of the future who reside in the “crystal” palaces: “they have both [...] morality and culture [of nobility], and the strength and energy of working people” (327).<sup>68</sup> Nonetheless, like Vera Pavlovna’s other dreams, the fourth dream not only reflects her inner-self, but also contains a prophecy. Even though Vera Pavlovna’s workshop has a lot in common with the world of the future, this “crystal” megalopolis embodies the promise of liberation for all people rather than just for women.

Significantly, Vera Pavlovna and the goddess of Freedom and Equality are welcomed in this “crystal” world of the future by the maiden who appeared in Vera Pavlovna’s other

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<sup>66</sup> “...целую большую отрасль науки, все учение об отправлениях нервной системы” (Chernyshevskii 276).

<sup>67</sup> “...это постоянное, сильное, здоровое возбуждение нерв, оно необходимо развивает нервную систему [...] поэтому умственные и нравственные силы растут в [нем] от [его] любви” (Chernyshevskii 276).

<sup>68</sup> “...они имеют [...] нравственное развитие [благородных людей] вместе с физическим развитием [...] рабочих людей...” (Chernyshevskii 276).

dreams. It is in her first dream that this maiden introduces herself to Vera Pavlovna as “the bride of [her] bridegroom” (“невеста твоего жениха”). Some scholars claim that by naming herself “the bride of [Vera Pavlovna’s] bridegroom,” the maiden seems to equate herself with Vera Pavlovna in a sense. Even though this maiden does not name her bridegroom, it is clearly Lopukhov, who told Vera that he was betrothed to a virtuous “bride” in real life. In a short time after this dream Vera Pavlovna in fact gets married to Lopukhov. Nonetheless, the presence of this maiden in Vera Pavlovna’s dream signifies more than merely an upcoming marriage.

First of all, it is an important detail that the maiden asks Vera Pavlovna to call her “the love of humanity” and, what is more, confesses that she is the one who freed and cured Vera Pavlovna. As Irina Paperno asserts, the beautiful bride whom Vera Pavlovna sees in her first dream is akin to Jesus Christ. In her analysis of Chernyshevsky’s novel, Irina Paperno pays special attention to the deeds of this beautiful bride: she cures a paralyzed maiden, Vera Pavlovna herself. According to the Bible, this is one of the miracles performed by Jesus Christ. Yet, before the bride cures Vera, she says to the paralyzed heroine of Chernyshevsky’s novel: “But now, as soon as I touch your hand, you’ll be cured. You see, you’re cured already. Get up! [...] And Verochka stands” (130).<sup>69</sup> The words of the bride are reminiscent of those of Jesus Christ in the New Testament: “Arise [...] and go...” (Matthew 9:6). As Irina Paperno suggests, this feminized image of Jesus Christ might be inspired by George Sand, who was called a “female Christ” in Russia (209). Sand’s novels are mentioned several times in Chernyshevsky’s novel. Moreover, as many scholars point out, some plot elements of *What Is To Be Done?* (a love triangle, Lopukhov’s suicide) are similar to those of Sand’s novel *Jacques* (1833). In addition, in the Bible, The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is conceived as a

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<sup>69</sup> “Ты теперь будешь здорова, вот только я коснусь твоей руки, – видишь, ты уже и здорова, вставай же [...]. Верочка встала” (Chernyshevskii 80).

“groom” (“Behold, the bridegroom cometh” (Matthew 25:6)). Accordingly, one may suggest that by creating a feminized version of Jesus Christ, Chernyshevsky makes this “bride” an embodiment of The Kingdom of Heaven.

Furthermore, in the fourth dream, the “crystal” megalopolis of “New Russia” is identified as the Promised or Holy Land (“земля обетованная”), “a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:17).<sup>70</sup> However, in Chernyshevsky’s novel this paradise on earth is reached not through faith in Jesus Christ and suffering, but through faith in reason and “rational egoism.” Rational egoism is the “catechism” of the main characters of Chernyshevsky’s novel. It allows them to maximize their own self-interests by means of logic. For example, Lopukhov conceives of his suicide as immensely profitable for himself. By “staging” his suicide, he gains more than either Kirsanov or Vera Pavlovna: he remains faithful to his principles (he does not take advantage of Vera Pavlovna, but respects her as a human being) and, at the same time, he gets an opportunity to marry a decent person who is more compatible with him than Vera Pavlovna. Likewise, the people of the future behave in a way that allows them to maximize their own interests and experience only pleasure. As Paperno underscores, suffering is pointless from Chernyshevsky’s perspective. Following the lead of the German philosopher and anthropologist Ludwig Feuerbach, Chernyshevsky claims that “by suffering a human being rejects reality” (Paperno 170). In addition, Chernyshevsky’s concept of “rational egoism” rejects the Christian idea of sin: what is understood as sinful in terms of Christianity is merely that which is less profitable for a human being, or “miscalculated” in terms of rational egoism (Paperno 170). Consequently, according to Feuerbach, a sinless human being does nothing for which he needs to be redeemed or punished, and therefore is equal to God (Paperno 170). Hence, if one is capable of achieving paradise, it will be an earthly man-made paradise like the one that

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<sup>70</sup> “...где течет молоко и мед” (Chernyshevskii 356).

Chernyshevsky depicts on the pages of his novel.

Significantly, the final chapter of Chernyshevsky's novel is set in the near future (1865) and opens with the phrase: "To the Passage!" This exclamation is uttered by a lady in a pink dress who is riding in a carriage with a man who has just been released from the prison. In her dissertation on glass imagery in Russian literature, Julia Chadaga claims that this man is Chernyshevsky's *alter ego* (183). The scholar also assumes that, taking into account that the Passage<sup>71</sup> is a glass covered arcade in St. Petersburg, such a ride toward this building—which is reminiscent of the glass city in Vera Pavlovna's dream—might be an implication of the arrival of the long-awaited revolution, which was expected to lead to the creation of a "socialist" paradise on earth.

Thus, in Chernyshevsky's novel, the Crystal Palace is imbued with the idea of freedom and universal happiness, both of which are achieved by means of reason rather than Christian faith. The rural megalopolis, into which Paxton's Palace is transformed in Chernyshevsky's novel, is a full realization of a socialist utopia—an incarnation of a "brave new world" (Katz, "But This Building..." 70)—the land of progressive people who live together in a commune, share all goods, and heavily rely on technology. Accordingly, in Vera Pavlovna's fourth dream, a thematic apotheosis of the entire novel is reached—it promises the prompt creation of a world for which "the true apostles of the new creed" (Pereira 76)—the main characters of Chernyshevsky's novel—yearn.

Yet it is no surprise that such a "magnanimous" world of the future is modeled after the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. As was discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Chernyshevsky conceived of the real building as a grandiose enterprise that was in all

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<sup>71</sup> It is worth mentioning that Fourier, the founding father of the phalanstery, considers arcades to be the best venue for the commune (Chadaga 289). Moreover, as I have noted above, in his article, Chernyshevsky compares the Crystal Palace to the Passage: "The width of the Sydenham palace is almost equal to the length of our [St. Petersburg] Passage; the length is commensurate with this frightful width. Thirty or forty Passages would barely add up to one Crystal Palace" (93).



respects (intellectual, moral, and aesthetic) useful for society and, at the same time, profitable for its creator and investors. Therefore, one may posit that this venture is completely aligned with the ideas that Chernyshevsky expressed in his article on the anthropological principle in 1860—it is a manifestation of “rational egoism” in action. This was probably the main reason that Chernyshevsky chose to use this particular building as a means of expressing his dearest aspiration in allegorical form. It simply required him to imbue particular features of the real building (that he extolled in his 1854 article) with the ideas that he expressed in his article on the anthropological principle. It seems that this is exactly what he did in order to create the beautiful glass megalopolis of the future in his novel, *What Is To Be Done?*

Thus, the real building that served a higher purpose—“to elevate and instruct, as well as to delight and amuse, the minds of all classes of [British] people”—turned into a symbol of a socialist paradise in a novel that aimed to demonstrate how to bring about positive changes in the current social order by “enlightening” the representatives of the Russian nation regardless their class.

## **Chapter II.**

### **The Crystal Palace as an Instrument of Dehumanization and Oppression in Dostoevsky**

While the Crystal Palace at Sydenham had many admirers from all over the world, it also had a number of vocal adversaries. Among them was Fyodor Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky visited the Crystal Palace during his eight-day trip to Britain in 1862. This glass edifice had a great impact on his imagination. Dostoevsky mentions it in several of his works: *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863), *Notes from Underground* (1864), and *Crime and Punishment* (1866). In each of these works, Dostoevsky invokes the Crystal Palace in order to criticize any attempts to build a society in which there is an established order based on intellect alone. From his perspective, this glass edifice is an instrument of dehumanization and oppression of both its tenants and its creators. Using the image of the Crystal Palace, he argues that any theory based on reason rather than on human nature leads to hell rather than to paradise.

#### ***Winter Notes on Summer Impressions***

The Crystal Palace makes its first appearance in Dostoevsky's travelogue, *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*. In this travelogue, Dostoevsky describes his first trip to Europe, on which he embarked in June 1862. During his pilgrimage to the "land of holy wonders," as he ironically referred to Europe, the Russian writer visited several European capitals and other major cities such as Berlin, Wiesbaden, Dresden, Paris, Geneva, Florence, and London. In one of the chapters of his travelogue, Dostoevsky describes his eight-day trip to London, including his visit to the Crystal Palace—a venue of the International Exposition:

A city with its millions and its worldwide trade, the Crystal Palace, the International

Exposition... Yes, the Exposition is striking. You feel a terrible force that has united all these people here, who came from all over the world, into a single herd; you become aware of a gigantic idea; you feel that here something has already been achieved, that here there is victory and triumph. You even begin to be afraid of something. No matter how independent you might be, for some reason you become terrified. (37)<sup>72</sup>

The International Exposition, which Dostoevsky mentions here, is the second London World's Fair. This World's Fair, like the first one housed at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, was dedicated to the latest triumphs of science and technology (Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 376). It was opened in May 1862 and took place at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, the bigger version of the original Paxton's Palace. Even though the building itself was an even greater spectacle than the entire Fair, Dostoevsky, who had a background in architecture, does not include any description of this glass edifice in his travelogue.

In his book, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Marshall Berman posits that such an "assault on the Crystal Palace" is rooted in Dostoevsky's "envy and defensiveness toward the constructive achievements of the West" (240). Berman comes to such a conclusion after having analyzed Dostoevsky's treatment of other major European attractions in his travelogue: Köln's cathedral, its legendary medieval monument, and its brand new bridge, "the city's most impressive modern work" (Berman 240).

Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that, for Dostoevsky, this trip to Europe was not merely a sightseeing expedition, but rather an opportunity to see firsthand the source and execution of the ideas that he was convinced were corrupting Russia at that time. It is for this reason that he pays special attention in his travelogue to his own impressions of Europeans and the ways in which they live, rather than offering a precise and meticulous description of the usual touristic sights. As he states in the foreword to *Winter Notes*, his

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<sup>72</sup> "Да, выставка поразительна. Вы чувствуете страшную силу, которая соединила тут всех этих бесчисленных людей, пришедших со всего мира, в едино стадо; вы сознаете исполинскую мысль; вы чувствуете, что тут что-то уже достигнуто, что тут победа, торжество. Вы даже как будто начинаете бояться чего-то. Как бы вы ни были независимы, но вам отчего-то становится страшно" (Dostoevskii 5: 69).

travelogue presents a “whole picture,” a “panorama” of life in Europe from a “bird’s-eye view,” “like the Promised Land viewed from the perspective of a mountain top” (2).<sup>73</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that Dostoevsky does not portray the Crystal Palace itself, but rather shares his own emotional reaction to what he believes the glass edifice represents. He points out that, in this “colossal palace,” everything is “proud,” “solemn,” “triumphant,” and above all “terrifying.” Dostoevsky was interested in the symbolic value of the Crystal Palace rather than in its architecture or treasures per se.

Judging by his overall impression of the Crystal Palace, one may argue that, for Dostoevsky, this glass edifice is more than just a building—it represents a colossal idea. This building seems to attract people from all over the world and unite them into “one fold” (“едино стадо”). This terrifies the narrator of *Winter Notes* and makes him question the nature of this edifice: “Hasn’t the ideal in fact been achieved here? [...] Isn’t this the ultimate, isn’t it in fact the ‘one fold’? Isn’t it in fact necessary to accept this as the truth fulfilled and grown dumb once and for all?” (37).<sup>74</sup> He incorporates into his question an expression from the Bible—“one fold.” This is a direct allusion to the Gospel of John: “there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16). This is a line from the parable of the good shepherd. According to Matthew Henry’s commentaries, this parable is derived from Eastern customs in sheep management: “Men, as creatures depending on their Creator, are called the sheep of his pasture. The church of God in the world is as a sheep-fold, exposed to deceivers and persecutors” (Matthew Henry’s commentaries). Even though a flock of sheep stands for Christians in the Bible, it is not equal to the “one fold,” which is a more capacious term. “One fold” signifies a unity of all believers, the Jews and the Gentiles, in the gospel church. As

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<sup>73</sup> “...как земля обетованная с горы в перспективе” (Dostoevskii 5: 47).

<sup>74</sup> “Уж не это ли, в самом деле, достигнутый идеал? — думаете вы; — не конец ли тут? не это ли уж и в самом деле, ‘едино стадо.’ Не придется ли принять это, и в самом деле, за полную правду и занеметь окончательно?” (Dostoevskii 5: 69).

Matthew Henry points out, there is also an allusion to the creation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ:

...he [Jesus Christ] is that one King in allegiance to whom all God's spiritual Israel shall cheerfully unite, and under whose protection they shall all be gathered. All believers unite in *one Lord, one faith, and one baptism*. And the uniting of Jews and Gentiles in the gospel church, their becoming one fold under Christ the one great Shepherd, is doubtless the union that is chiefly looked at in this prophecy. (Matthew Henry's commentaries)

Thus, it is arguable that, in mentioning that the crowd at the Crystal Palace is deceptively reminiscent of the biblical "one fold," the narrator implies that it is possible to mistake this glass edifice itself for a New Jerusalem, or the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, in his description of his visit to the Crystal Palace, the narrator seems to implicitly liken this glass edifice to the Tower of Babel, as if hinting at the Palace's true function: it does not aim to unite people and bring them into "one fold," but rather to confuse them and jeopardize the salvation of the world:

You look at these hundreds of thousands, these millions of people humbly streaming here from all over the face of the earth—people who come with a single thought, peacefully, persistently, and silently crowding into this colossal palace—and you feel that here something final has been accomplished, accomplished and brought to an end. It is a kind of biblical scene, something about Babylon, a kind of prophecy from the Apocalypse fulfilled before your very eyes. (37)<sup>75</sup>

What is more, one may suggest that, by creating this Crystal Palace, people are making an attempt to trade places with God and impose their own control over the world, their own rules. Such an idea is explicitly expressed in Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, which was written in the span of 1877–1880:

...socialism is not only the labor question or the question of the so-called fourth estate, but first of all the question of atheism, the question of the modern embodiment of atheism, the question of the Tower of Babel built precisely without God, not to go

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<sup>75</sup> "Вы смотрите на эти сотни тысяч, на эти миллионы людей, покорно текущих сюда со всего земного шара, — людей, пришедших с одною мыслью, тихо, упорно и молча толпящихся в этом колоссальном дворце, и вы чувствуете, что тут что-то окончательное совершилось, совершилось и закончилось. Это какая-то библейская картина, что-то о Вавилоне, какое-то пророчество из Апокалипсиса, в очию свершившееся" (Dostoevskii 5: 70).

from earth to heaven but to bring heaven down to earth (26).<sup>76</sup>

It is significant that the real Crystal Palace was considered to be a monument to human prowess and ingenuity. No architects were involved in its design or construction; the entire project was executed solely by engineers and workers (Hobhouse 17; Katz, “But This Building...” 72; Piggott 6). Accordingly, Michael Katz asserts that the Crystal Palace might be considered an “incarnation of natural science applied to human behavior” (Katz 72). He also writes: “...it [the Crystal Palace] is the work of the man-god, an emblem of human pride, a monument to hubris; it is, indeed, a new Tower of Babel, but with a difference—this time the edifice of human arrogance has reached completion” (Katz, “But This Building...” 72).

It is also worth mentioning that even though the building itself was entirely secular and pre-fabricated, it had cathedral-like proportions (nave and transept) and its opening ceremony was similar to a church service (there was a priest, organ music, and choirs) (Beaver 40). As Michael Katz points out, many of those who visited the Crystal Palace admitted that they experienced something transcendental during their visit (“But This Building...” 73). Likewise, Dostoevsky notes that this building is redolent of something outlandish; however, for him, this secular monument to human dignity is rather a temple of Baal: “You feel that it would require a great deal of eternal spiritual resistance and denial not to succumb, not to surrender to the impression, not to bow down to fact, and not to idolize Baal, that is, not to accept what is as your ideal...” (37).<sup>77</sup> The word “baal” means “Lord” and was used by the Semitic peoples/the Hebrews to designate certain local deities (Lurker 27). This word, therefore, might be considered a generic term for gods. In addition, in

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<sup>76</sup> “...социализм есть не только рабочий вопрос, или так называемого четвертого сословия, но по преимуществу есть атеистический вопрос, вопрос современного воплощения атеизма, вопрос Вавилонской башни, строящейся именно без бога, не для достижения небес с земли, а для сведения небес на землю” (Dostoevskii 14: 25).

<sup>77</sup> “Вы чувствуете, что много надо векового отпора и отрицания, чтоб не поддаться, не подчиниться впечатлению, не поклониться факту и не обоготворить Ваала, то есть не принять существующего за свой идеал...” (Dostoevskii 5: 71).

Canaan, Baal was a deity of the Sun and prosperity (Katz, “But This Building...” 70).

Accordingly, Baal is inextricably linked to paganism and idolatry—the worship of objects.

Yet, it might also be associated with the Devil himself. The name of Beelzebub, the chief of the demons in the New Testament (Matthew 12: 24-27), is derived from “Baal.” Baal-zebub (Lurker 27). Taking this into account, one may even suggest that the Crystal Palace was perceived by Dostoevsky as a temple of the Devil.

It is also significant that although the entire chapter in which the Crystal Palace is prominently featured is entitled “Baal,” the Palace (as well as the British capital) is not the only sight portrayed in this chapter. This chapter even begins with a depiction of Paris rather than London. Dostoevsky ironically praises French social order and calls Paris “the most moral and most virtuous city in the whole world” (35).<sup>78</sup> Then, Dostoevsky compares the French capital with London and maintains that the latter is not only akin to Paris but rather is a brighter and greater version of it: the whole of London represents “bourgeois order in its highest degree” (37).<sup>79</sup> He dwells more on this concept of bourgeois order in a subsequent chapter. He asserts that in Paris such an order is based on the desire of the greedy and progressive French bourgeois to accumulate more money and acquire more things: “To amass a fortune and possess as many things as possible has become the primary code of morality, a catechism, of the Parisian” (45).<sup>80</sup> They value objects more than anything else and are almost ready to turn into objects themselves. For this reason, one may assume that this preoccupation with objects, or, in other words, the materialism of the progressive bourgeois, might be considered as a modern version of Baal worship. Thus, in *Winter Notes*, the Crystal Palace is an embodiment of modern materialism.

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<sup>78</sup> “самый нравственный и самый добродетельный город на всем земном шаре” (Dostoevskii 5: 68).

<sup>79</sup> “буржуазный порядок в высочайшей степени” (Dostoevskii 5: 69).

<sup>80</sup> “Накопить fortuna и иметь как можно больше вещей – это обратилось в самый главный кодекс нравственности, в катехизм парижанина” (Dostoevskii 5: 76).

Significantly, in France, this social order based on materialism is held up as the foundation for a paradise on Earth and, as the narrator asserts, French bourgeois are convinced that they have succeeded in their attempts and that Paris is nothing other than an “earthly paradise”:

What order! What prudence, what well defined and solidly established relationships; how secure and sharply delineated everything is; how content everyone is; how they struggle to convince themselves that they are content and completely happy; how, in the end, they have struggled to the point where they really have convinced themselves that they are content and completely happy, and... and... they have stopped at that. The road goes no further. (35)<sup>81</sup>

Likewise, the Crystal Palace, this British paragon of “bourgeois order in its highest degree,” gives an impression that man has fulfilled his aspirations and created a secular “earthly paradise,” akin to that which was promised in the Bible: “you feel that here something has already been achieved, that here there is victory and triumph” (37).<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, it is only an illusion.

Before proceeding with the description of his visit to the Crystal Palace, the narrator states that despite the external regimentation and deceptively comfortable lifestyle, the reality is that, in both London and Paris, nothing has been achieved yet: instead, a desperate struggle takes place—the struggle “to the death between the general individualistic basis of the West and the necessity of somehow getting along with each other, of somehow putting together a community and settling into a *single anthill*; it may turn into an anthill, but if only we settle into it without devouring each other, then we won’t turn into cannibals!” (36; emphasis added).<sup>83</sup> Thus, from Dostoevsky’s perspective, what Europeans in fact try to bring about is

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<sup>81</sup> “Что за порядок! Какое благоразумие, какие определенные и прочно установившиеся отношения; как всё обеспечено и разлиновано; как все довольны, как все стараются уверить себя, что довольны и совершенно счастливы, и как все, наконец, до того достарались, что и действительно уверили себя, что довольны и совершенно счастливы, и... и... остановились на том. Далее дороги нет” (Dostoevskii 5: 68).

<sup>82</sup> “вы чувствуете, что тут что-то уже достигнуто, что тут победа, торжество” (Dostoevskii 5: 69).

<sup>83</sup> “на смерть всеобщезападного личного начала с необходимостью хоть как-нибудь ужиться вместе, хоть как-нибудь составить общину и устроиться в *одном муравейнике*; хоть в муравейник обратиться, да только устроиться, не поедая друг друга — не то обращение в антропофаги!” (Dostoevskii 5: 69).



not an earthly paradise, but an anthill.

In a subsequent chapter, the image of an anthill as an ideal society reappears. In this chapter, the narrator explicitly draws a parallel between Socialist aspirations and an anthill.<sup>84</sup> He describes and accounts for the futile attempts of the French Fourierists to create a commune that would be as orderly and well-constructed as an anthill, where “everything runs so well, everything is so regulated, all are well-fed and happy, each knows his business” (51).<sup>85</sup> The narrator points out that these Fourierists fail to force French men to unite, because Europeans are not inclined to brotherhood by nature. What is more, he underlines that what the Fourierists try to do is bribe men with comfort for the sake of creating a brotherhood. The latter implies that the social formula they offer is based, above all, on materialism. Thus, it is no surprise that the narrator asserts that a victory in the struggle to create an anthill-like community (in both Paris and London) signifies the triumph of Baal.

Moreover, the narrator underlines that this struggle aims to “maintain the status quo [of humanity] [...], to tear from oneself all desires and hopes, to curse one’s future” (36).<sup>86</sup> This idea of maintaining the status quo of humanity seems to be aligned with an idea that Aleksander Herzen expressed in his book *From the Other Shore* (1847 – 50). He wrote: “If humanity went straight to some goal there would be no history, only logic; humanity would stop in some finished form, in a spontaneous *status quo* like the animals... Besides, if the libretto existed, history would lose all interest, it would become futile, boring, ridiculous”

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<sup>84</sup> Such comparisons were commonplace in the Russian journalism of the period (Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 424). Yet, in her commentaries to Dostoevsky’s travelogue, E. Kijko suggests that Dostoevsky might be referring in particular to Chernyshevsky’s article on the German philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, “Lessing, his time, his life and work” (1856 – 1857). In this article Chernyshevsky mentions Lessing’s idea that a human society might be juxtaposed with an anthill where everyone is useful for the anthill as a whole and, at the same time, does not disturb but rather helps the other ants. (Dostoevskii 5: 371).

<sup>85</sup> “...всё так хорошо, всё так разлиновано, все сыты, счастливы, каждый знает своё дело” (Dostoevskii 5: 81).

<sup>86</sup> “остановиться на status quo, вырвать с мясом из себя все желания и надежды, проклясть свое будущее, в которое не хватает веры, может быть, у самих предводителей прогресса, и поклониться Ваалу” (Dostoevskii 5: 69).

(qtd. in Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 424). Herzen had a great ideological influence on Dostoevsky (Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 424, Patterson x). Moreover, Dostoevsky visited Herzen during his eight-day trip to London (Patterson x). Thus, it seems logical to assume that some of Dostoevsky's ideas, which are expressed most fully in his travelogue, may have been inspired by Herzen. Accordingly, one may suggest that, for Dostoevsky, the creation of the anthill-like community signifies the end of world history and the cessation of all further human striving, hope, and aspiration.

Indeed, in his description of Paris, the narrator underscores that its "calm [bourgeois] order" draws Paris and its million and a half citizens to the stage where it all "will turn into some kind of professorial German town fossilized in calm and order" (36).<sup>87</sup> It is also significant that this description precedes that of the Crystal Palace. This glass edifice seems to embody a promise of finality. Fittingly, one of the specific characteristics of this edifice is that it makes people grow numb and become submissive. What is more, while standing in the Crystal Palace, the narrator is troubled by a question: "Isn't it in fact necessary to accept this as the truth fulfilled and grown dumb once and for all?" (37).<sup>88</sup> This question implies that, like the ideal of the anthill, the static, secular apocalypse of the Crystal Palace not only entails the cessation of all human desires and hope, but also signifies the end of world history. Accordingly, what at first glance seems to be a "single herd"/"one fold," is in fact a "single anthill."

Furthermore, the Crystal Palace is only a beautiful decoration, an example of external splendor, which aims to deceive and to impose the power of Baal upon people all over the world. Behind this beautiful mask hides a horrible and terrifying truth: workers and their

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<sup>87</sup> "...обратится в какой-нибудь окаменелый в затишье и порядке профессорский немецкий городок" (Dostoevskii 5: 68).

<sup>88</sup> "Не придется ли принять это, и в самом деле, за полную правду и занеметь окончательно?" (Dostoevskii 5: 69).

families drown in the turmoil of technological progress. To buttress his argument, the narrator lumps this glass edifice together with London's bars and brothels, which he considers, along with the Crystal Palace itself, to be a manifestation of Baal-worship. At night the streets are brightly illuminated by gas lights that burn in thick clusters. Everything is set as if a "ball [is] being given for those white negroes," who are now flocking into the open taverns and streets. The narrator maintains that "[t]he drinking establishments are decorated like palaces. [...] Everyone rushes as fast as he can to drink until he loses consciousness..." (38).<sup>89</sup> He describes the prostitutes' quarter (the Haymarket) in a similar vein:

At night prostitutes crowd several streets in this quarter by the thousands. The streets are illuminated by clusters of gas lights, the like of which we cannot comprehend. At every step there are magnificent coffee houses ornamented with mirrors and gold. Here are the meeting places, here the refuges. It is even terrifying to enter this crowd. (39)<sup>90</sup>

Here everything is as bright and colossal as in the Crystal Palace: the narrator even explicitly states that these crowds are similar to those at the Palace. What is more, he comes to the conclusion that the whole of London is in the grip of the "mighty" spirit of Baal: "People are people everywhere, but here everything was so colossal, so bright that it was as if you were feeling what until now you had only imagined. Indeed, here you do not even see the people but a loss of consciousness, systematic, submissive, encouraged" (39).<sup>91</sup> Accordingly, the bars and brothels hiding behind the scenes, are also a part of the "social formula" ("общественная формула"), which is beautifully represented as the Crystal Palace. As Joseph Frank writes, the sacrifices that the worship of Baal entails give rise to the obliteration

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<sup>89</sup> "...точно бал устраивается для этих белых негров. [...] Пивные лавки разубраны, как дворцы" (Dostoevskii 5: 70).

<sup>90</sup> "Это квартал, в котором по ночам, в некоторых улицах, тысячами толпятся публичные женщины. Улицы освещены пучками газа, о которых у нас не имеют понятия. Великолепные кофейни, разубранные зеркалами и золотом, на каждом шагу. Тут и сборища, тут и приюты. Даже жутко входить в эту толпу" (Dostoevskii 5: 71).

<sup>91</sup> "Народ везде народ, но тут все было так колоссально, так ярко, что вы как бы ощупали то, что до сих пор только воображали. Тут уж вы видите даже и не народ, а потерю сознания, систематическую, покорную, поощряемую" (Dostoevskii 5: 71).

of “any vestiges of human feelings” among the representatives of the working class: all that they search for is “sensual pleasure and oblivion” (Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 378).

Moreover, the narrator underscores that millions have been thrown to the bottom of the social system: “These millions of people, abandoned and driven away from the human feast, shoving and crushing each other in the underground darkness into which they have been thrown by their older brothers, gropingly knock at any gate whatsoever and seek entrance so they won't suffocate in the dark cellar” (39).<sup>92</sup> From his perspective, the only way for those people to save themselves is to resist Baal by diverging from this “social formula” (общественная формула) at any cost: becoming outcasts (the Shakers (“трясучки”) or wanderers (“странники”)) and repudiating “the human image” (“образ человеческий”):

...they [...] avenge themselves against society as some kind of underground Mormons, Shakers, wanderers... We are surprised at the stupidity of going over to the Shakers and becoming wanderers; we do not even suspect that here is a secession from our social formulas; a stubborn, unconscious secession; an instinctive secession, no matter what the cost, for the sake of salvation; a secession from us made with disgust and horror. (39)<sup>93</sup>

Thus, through the image of the Crystal Palace in *Winter Notes*, Dostoevsky reveals the true nature of what he believed to be the Western idea of brotherhood—the war of all against all, which is splendidly decorated and elevated to the status of a new social order. From Dostoevsky's perspective, the Crystal Palace embodies this social ideal of the West: it is a Tower of Babel, an ant-hill, which signifies the end of world history and the total compliance of human volition with the tenets of materialism. In *Winter Notes*, this secular monument to

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<sup>92</sup> “Эти миллионы людей, оставленные и прогнанные с пиру людского, толкаясь и давя друг друга в подземной тьме, в которую они брошены своими старшими братьями, ощупью стучатся хоть в какие-нибудь ворота и ищут выхода, чтоб не задохнуться в темном подвале” (Dostoevskii 5: 71).

<sup>93</sup> “И они сами знают [...] и покамест отмищают за себя обществу какими-то подземными мормонами, трясучками, странниками... Мы удивляемся глупости идти в какие-то трясучки и странники и не догадываемся, что тут – отделение от нашей общественной формулы, отделение упорное, бессознательное; инстинктивное отделение во что бы то ни стало для ради спасения, отделение с отвращением от нас и ужасом” (Dostoevskii 5: 71).

human dignity and vanity, so dear to Europeans, is depicted as an instrument of dehumanization and oppression.

### *Notes from Underground*

The Crystal Palace makes its next appearance in Dostoevsky's novella, *Notes from Underground*, which was published in 1864. In this work, Dostoevsky evokes the image of the Crystal Palace in order to criticize the ideal of the Crystal Palace that Nikolai Chernyshevsky describes in his novel, *What Is To Be Done?* (1863).<sup>94</sup> As was discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, Chernyshevsky transforms the Crystal Palace into a glass megalopolis, which houses the ideal Utopian society of the future. It is worth reiterating that in this glass city all people live together in perfect harmony, because they live in accordance with their reason and self-interest. Chernyshevsky asserts that such a human society is ideal and final, because the people need not anticipate anything but working and being happy for the rest of their lives. All members of society are perpetually free and able to stand on an equal footing with everyone else. Thus, in his novel Chernyshevsky celebrates the finality of the Crystal Palace—the very feature of the palace that the author of *Winter Notes* finds so repulsive. It is not surprising that in the course of the polemic with Chernyshevsky in the pages of *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky treats Chernyshevsky's ideal of the Crystal Palace in the same way that he treated the original Paxton's Palace in his *Winter Notes*. By doing so, he further develops the ideas raised in his travelogue and demonstrates the full potential of the Crystal Palace, which becomes a symbol of a Socialist utopia after the publication of Chernyshevsky's novel.

The image of the Crystal Palace emerges in the first part of Dostoevsky's novella,

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<sup>94</sup> In his article "Dostoevsky and Chernyshevsky," Derek Offord posits that *Notes* might have been "written [...] instead of a leading article [Dostoevsky] was at one time planning for the journal *Epoch*, in which he intended to review *What Is To Be Done?*" (509). Dostoevsky mentioned his intention of writing such a review in one of his letters to his brother. Moreover, in some of these letters, Dostoevsky himself frequently refers to *Notes from Underground* as an "article" (Offord 509).

which is comprised entirely of the notes of a man who, according to an authorial footnote, is an inevitable product of Russian cultural development. He claims to be writing from his “underground” hole, or a “dark cellar,” which is not only a real place, but also a psychological state: he is totally isolated from the society to which he is supposed to belong; however, he claims that he prefers his “underground” hole to the world above because here he can preserve his individuality and exercise his “consciousness,” which should be understood as “acute self-awareness.”<sup>95</sup> In the first part of his notes, he lays out his “underground” philosophy and launches a polemic against the Russian utopian socialists of his time (1860s).

The entire novella is written in the form of a dialogue between the Underground Man and his imaginary listener. In the first part of the notes, this imaginary reader takes on the features of an ardent adherent of Chernyshevsky’s ideas (Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 421; Mochulsky 342; Peace 255). This imaginary interlocutor believes in the ideal of the Crystal Palace because he is convinced that all human deeds are determined by the laws of nature and thus, if one calculated all human desires by means of reason alone, new economic relations would come into being, “all ready for use and calculated with mathematical exactitude” (283).<sup>96</sup> Then, after any given man had been enlightened by science, he would abide by these calculations (since man is innately good and amenable to reason) and build the Crystal Palace. At that time, the Golden Age of humanity would begin: man would be doing only good and, as a result, would rejoice in all of the positive human values such as peace, freedom, prosperity, wealth, and so on (280).

The Underground Man, in his turn, asserts that the ideal of the Crystal Palace cannot be reached, because the Socialist theory that is “calculated with mathematical exactitude” and

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<sup>95</sup> In his article on Dostoevsky and Chernyshevsky, Derek Offord posits that the underground, in which Dostoevsky’s anti-hero chooses to live, might be “suggested by the dank cellar (*podval*) from which Chernyshevsky’s radiant heroine Vera Pavlovna sensibly strives to escape in her dreams as she moves towards the rationalist utopia” (530).

<sup>96</sup> “совсем уж готовые и тоже вычисленные с математическою точностию” (Dostoevskii 5: 113).

on which the ideal of the Crystal Palace depends, is rife with assumptions and thus is not viable. First of all, he insists that the “most valuable good” is not among the most desirable values that Socialists envision in abundance within the walls of the Crystal Palace. “Taking the averages of statistical figures and relying on scientific and economic formulae,” they included only positive values, because they believe that man’s advantage lies only in doing what is good and desiring only the rational. The Underground Man, on the other hand, argues that man is a cruel and capricious creature and that he values his “own sweet foolish will,” which depends on “the devil knows what,” more than reason and self-interest. To buttress his argument, he refers to world history which itself serves as proof of man’s proclivities for irrational and violent conduct: Cleopatra rejoiced in torturing her slave girls by sticking golden pins into their breasts; Attila the Hun and Napoleon (both Napoleon the Great and Napoleon III) spilt rivers of blood to conquer new territories.

Nonetheless, Socialists maintain that man is neither willful nor capricious, because all his deeds comply with the laws of nature. For that reason, they are certain that after science reeducates man, he will desire only the rational and the Crystal Palace will be constructed. The Underground Man undermines this assumption. He argues that even if science teaches man what “his real normal interests” are and how to fulfill them, man will not give up on his bad habits. He refers to the very same examples from world history to show that man’s propensity for misbehavior cannot be altered. If Attila the Hun was a barbarian, Napoleon is a civilized man, but despite that he is as bloodthirsty as Attila. Thus, it is obvious that civilization does not make people softer, but rather brings them to a stage at which they find “pleasure in bloodshed” (281).<sup>97</sup>

Yet, the Underground Man points out that even if the chaos and violence to which man is prone can be calculated, it does not mean that “the mere possibility of calculating it all

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<sup>97</sup> “отыщет в крови наслаждение” (Dostoevskii 5: 112).

beforehand would stop it all and reason would triumph in the end” (288).<sup>98</sup> He explains that when all human actions are calculated in accordance with the laws of nature, “there will be no more independent actions or adventures in the world” (283).<sup>99</sup> As a result, man will be bored and become “liable to get all sorts of ideas into [his] head” (283).<sup>100</sup> The Underground Man underscores that it is boredom that makes people want to stick golden pins into somebody. Accordingly, the implementation of one’s own free will is not only the most desirable manifestation of goodness (one that is overlooked by statisticians and sages), but is also something “against which all theories and systems are continually wrecked” (284).<sup>101</sup>

Furthermore, the Underground Man asserts that if a real mathematical formula that accounts for all our desires and whims is really discovered one day, man will most likely cease to feel desire and emotions, because “who would want to desire according to a mathematical formula?” (284).<sup>102</sup> In addition, man will lose his freedom, because even if, for example, the act of thumbing one’s nose at somebody is computed and proved as a necessity in certain circumstances, there is no freedom left for the person who thumbed his/her nose at somebody: he/she will have to accept it as a necessity whether he/she likes it or not. Consequently, the man deprived of his desires and free will, and the power of choice will cease to be a human being and turn into an organ stop: “For what is man without desires, without free will, and without the power of choice but a stop in an organ pipe?” (284).<sup>103</sup>

The Underground Man argues that such a transformation will occur, because “...reason

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<sup>98</sup> “одна возможность предварительного расчета все остановит и рассудок возьмет свое” (Dostoevskii 5: 117).

<sup>99</sup> “...на свете уже не будет более ни поступков, ни приключений” (Dostoevskii 5: 113).

<sup>100</sup> “...от скуки чего не выдумаешь!” (Dostoevskii 5: 113)

<sup>101</sup> “...от которой все системы и теории постоянно разлетаются к черту” (Dostoevskii 5: 113).

<sup>102</sup> “Ну что за охота хотеть по табличке?” (Dostoevskii 5: 114).

<sup>103</sup> “...потому, что же такое человек без желаний, без воли и без хотений, как не штифтик в органном вале?” (Dostoevskii 5: 114).



is only reason, and it can only satisfy the reasoning ability of man, whereas volition is a manifestation [...] of the whole of human life, including reason with all its concomitant head-scratchings” (286).<sup>104</sup> He asserts that one’s faculty of reason comprises only a twentieth part of one’s whole capacity for life, for life is not “just extractions of square roots” (286).<sup>105</sup> In spite of this, Socialists allege that desire should entirely coincide with reason, because people will only be happy when they have learned to value reason over desire. They are convinced of this because they assume that it is impossible for one to simultaneously be reasonable and desire something nonsensical, since this would mean consciously going against one’s reason and wishing to harm oneself. The Underground Man undermines such an assumption by pointing out that, in order to assert his own free will, man, “if need be, is ready to challenge all laws, that is to say, reason, honour, peace, prosperity—in short, all those excellent and useful things” (281),<sup>106</sup> simply because he is phenomenally ungrateful. It is out of man’s sheer ingratitude that he deliberately desires the most uneconomical absurdity in order to prove to himself that he is still a man and not an organ-stop (in the words of Dostoevsky’s protagonist, “man only exists for the purpose of proving to himself every minute that he is a man and not an organ-stop” (289)).<sup>107</sup> Even if the world of the Crystal Palace becomes real and it is proven that man is nothing but an organ stop, man will still devise new methods of bringing about destruction and chaos and will even go mad on purpose in order to rid himself of reason and assert his “sweet foolish will.”

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<sup>104</sup> “...рассудок есть только рассудок и удовлетворяет только рассудочной способности человека, а хотенье есть проявление всей жизни, то есть всей человеческой жизни, и с рассудком, и со всеми почесываниями” (Dostoevskii 5: 115).

<sup>105</sup> “...не только одно извлечение квадратного корня” (Dostoevskii 5: 115).

<sup>106</sup> “...человек, если понадобится, готов против всех законов пойти, то есть против рассудка, чести, покоя, благоденствия, - одним словом, против всех этих прекрасных и полезных вещей” (Dostoevskii 5: 111).

<sup>107</sup> “...всё дело-то человеческое, кажется, и действительно в том только и состоит, чтоб человек поминутно доказывал себе, что он человек, а не шифтик!” (Dostoevskii 5: 117).

Building upon this idea, the Underground Man questions the necessity of altering human desires in order for man to live in the Crystal Palace. He suggests that man might merely rejoice in the process of building the Crystal Palace without wanting to actually live in it: “May it not be that... he only likes that edifice from a distance, not from close up; perhaps he only likes to build it and not to live in it, leaving it *aux animaux domestiques* such as ants, sheep, etc., etc.” (290).<sup>108</sup> Then, he proceeds to make the comparison between the Crystal Palace and an anthill: “Now, ants are quite a different matter. They have one marvelous building of this kind, a building that is forever indestructible—the ant-hill” (290).<sup>109</sup> From his perspective, these edifices are similar: they both are “forever indestructible” (“навекы нерушимое”). However, the Underground Man asserts that, unlike ants, humans prefer the process leading up to attainment over the final act of attainment, because the process of attaining is life itself, whereas the result is a promise of finality and, therefore, is the beginning of death:

And who knows [...] perhaps the whole aim mankind is striving to achieve on earth merely lies in this incessant process of achievement, or (to put it differently) in life itself, and not really in the attainment of any goal, which, needless to say, can be nothing else but twice-two-makes-four, that is to say, a formula; but twice-two-makes-four is not life, gentlemen. It is the beginning of death. (290)<sup>110</sup>

In their analyses of Dostoevsky’s novella, Joseph Frank and Elena Kijko suggest that, in *Notes from Underground*, the image of an anthill is an evocation of the ideas of French socialists, which were popular in Russia at that time (Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 424; Kijko in *Dostoevskii* 5: 371). Furthermore, as it was mentioned above, in his travelogue

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<sup>108</sup> “Почем вы знаете, может быть, он здание-то любит только издали, а отнюдь не вблизи; может быть, он только любит созидать его, а не жить в нем, представляя его потом *aux animaux domestique*, как-то муравьям, баранам и проч., и проч.” (*Dostoevskii* 5: 118).

<sup>109</sup> “Вот муравьи совершенно другого вкуса. У них есть одно удивительное здание в этом же роде, навеки нерушимое, — муравейник” (*Dostoevskii* 5: 118).

<sup>110</sup> “И, кто знает [...], может быть, что и вся-то цель на земле, к которой человечество стремится, только и заключается в одной этой непрерывности процесса достижения, иначе сказать — в самой жизни, а не собственно в цели, которая, разумеется, должна быть не иное что, как дважды два четыре, то есть формула, а ведь дважды два четыре есть уже не жизнь, господа, а начало смерти” (*Dostoevskii* 5: 118).

*Winter Notes On Summer Impressions*, Dostoevsky explicitly draws a parallel between the aspirations of French socialists and an anthill.<sup>111</sup> What is more, in *Winter Notes*, following the lead of Herzen, Dostoevsky conceives of the creation of the anthill-like community as the end of world history and the cessation of all further human striving, hope, and aspiration. Significantly, Dostoevsky perceives the Crystal Palace itself (the real building rather than Chernyshevsky's ideal) in a similarly apocalyptic fashion: in *Winter Notes*, the ideal of the anthill is projected onto this glass edifice, which becomes a symbol of a static, secular apocalypse—the cessation of all human desires and hope and the end of world history. The words of the Underground Man regarding the anthill and the Socialist ideal of the Crystal Palace are evocative of those expressed by the narrator in Dostoevsky's travelogue: in fact, they convey the same idea. Thus, it seems logical to assume that, in *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky further develops this idea by implying that Chernyshevsky's Crystal Palace, which is inspired by the ideal embodied by the real Palace at Sydenham, has the very same flaws. The ideal of the Crystal Palace, like the anthill theory and the social formula represented by the real glass edifice in London, is inhuman by nature and is not viable in the context of a human society. The Crystal Palace, like the anthill, is a manifestation of finality—merely a formula that promises to give a desired result.

What is more, as the Underground Man underscores, to be a man means to feel, to perceive, to suffer. He maintains that suffering is “the sole cause of consciousness” (292).<sup>112</sup> On the contrary, “in the Crystal Palace [suffering] is unthinkable,” for suffering is “doubt, it is negation, and what sort of Crystal Palace would it be if one were to have any doubts about

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<sup>111</sup> It is also worth reiterating that such a comparison was commonplace in the Russian journalism of the period (Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 424). What is more, in *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky might purposely invoke this image to attack Chernyshevsky. As was mentioned earlier, in his article on the German philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing “Lessing, his time, his life and work” (1856 – 1857), Chernyshevsky mentions Lessing's idea that a human society might be juxtaposed with an anthill, where everyone is useful for the entire anthill and at the same time do not disturb others, but rather helps them (Dostoevskii 5: 371).

<sup>112</sup> “это единственная причина сознания” (Dostoevskii 5: 119).

it?” (291).<sup>113</sup> The Underground Man goes on to say that “[c]onsciousness, for instance, is infinitely superior to twice-two. After twice-two there is nothing left for you to do, or even learn. All you could do then would be to stop up your five senses and sink into [observation]” (292).<sup>114</sup> Additionally, in *Winter Notes*, the narrator asserts that the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, which he beholds as a paragon of bourgeois order, causes people to grow mute and become submissive. Likewise, as an embodiment of precisely calculated human happiness, Chernyshevsky’s ideal of the Crystal Palace is inhuman by nature. It leads to the dehumanization and oppression of human beings rather than setting them free and becoming a guarantor of eternal happiness.

All of the Underground Man’s arguments then culminate in his final rejection of the Crystal Palace as a glass edifice that warrants his fear, since it is something he is not allowed to stick his tongue out at:

You believe in the Crystal Palace, forever indestructible, that is to say, in one at which you won’t be able to stick out your tongue even by stealth or cock a snook at even in your pocket. Well, perhaps I am afraid of this palace just because it is made of crystal and is forever indestructible, and just because I shan’t be able to poke my tongue out at it even by stealth. (292)<sup>115</sup>

The act of sticking one’s tongue out at something/somebody is the epitome of the expression of man’s “sweet foolish will,” which, as Dostoevsky’s character claims, man values over his reason and self-interest. The Crystal Palace, in contrast, is a glass prison in which man is merely an organ-stop deprived of his “sweet foolish will.” The Underground Man asserts that such a sacrifice is not justified, because a life lived in comfort is not what

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<sup>113</sup> “В хрустальном дворце оно [страдание] и немисливо: страдание есть сомнение, есть отрицание, а что за хрустальный дворец, в котором можно усумниться?” (Dostoevskii 5: 119).

<sup>114</sup> “Сознание, например, бесконечно выше, чем дважды два. После дважды двух уж, разумеется, ничего не останется, не только делать, но даже и узнавать. Всё, что тогда можно будет, это — заткнуть свои пять чувств и погрузиться в созерцание” (Dostoevskii 5: 119).

<sup>115</sup> “Вы верите в хрустальное здание, навеки нерушимое, то есть в такое, которому нельзя будет ни языка украдкой выставить, ни кукиша в кармане показать. Ну, а я, может быть, потому-то и боюсь этого здания, что оно хрустальное и навеки нерушимое и что нельзя будет даже и украдкой языка ему выставить” (Dostoevskii 5: 120).

man longs for or values above all else. He is confident that if man did indeed long for comfort, he would be satisfied with a chicken coop, because it can cover him when it rains outside and, and is thus as good as a palace. However, man yearns for something higher than material satisfaction and will accept neither the chicken coop nor a brick tenement as substitutions for the Crystal Palace, because the former have been elevated in man's estimation due merely to their practical advantages.

Although it seems as though the Underground Man completely rejects the idea of the Crystal Palace, he in fact only refutes it as an embodiment of the Socialists' aspirations, or as a chicken coop that satisfies only material needs: "...I refuse to accept a hencoop for a palace" (293).<sup>116</sup> He actually considers the possibility of the existence of a different Crystal Palace – one that "may be just an idle dream, it may be against all laws of nature, [he] may have invented it because of [his] own stupidity, because of certain old and irrational habits of [his] generation" (293).<sup>117</sup> It is for this Crystal Palace that he is ready to abandon his "underground": "I know [...] that it is not the dark cellar that is better, but something else, something else altogether, something I long for but cannot find" (294).<sup>118</sup>

Dostoevsky intended for this "true" Crystal Palace to appear in greater detail in this chapter, however, the entire section concerning it was censored.<sup>119</sup> In spite of this, scholars have relied upon notes from Dostoevsky's diary to conclude that the omitted passages described the Kingdom of Jesus Christ as "the one ultimate goal which each individual wants

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<sup>116</sup> "А покамест я уж не приму курятника за дворец" (Dostoevskii 5: 120).

<sup>117</sup> "Пусть даже так будет, что хрустальное здание есть пух, что по законам природы его и не полагается и что [он] выдумал его только вследствие [его] собственной глупости, вследствие некоторых старинных, нерациональных привычек [его] поколения" (Dostoevskii 5: 120).

<sup>118</sup> "...сам знаю, [...] что вовсе не подполье лучше, а что-то другое, совсем другое, которого я жажду, но которого никак не найду!" (Dostoevskii 5: 121).

<sup>119</sup> In his book *Dostoevsky: A Writer In His Time*, Joseph Frank suggests that it is for this reason that the section on the "true" Crystal Palace might be censored. He assumes that it was Dostoevsky's attempt to "give his own Christian significance to the symbol" that censors were accustomed to associate with atheist socialism (after the publication of *What Is To Be Done?*) that may have confused and frightened them or been interpreted as "both subversive and blasphemous" (Frank 427).

to attain and when he eventually attains it he will be completely regenerated” (Mitchell 211).

It is noteworthy that Dostoevsky expresses the very same idea earlier in his travelogue,

*Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*. The author of *Winter Notes* criticizes the ideas of

French socialists, who try to achieve freedom and brotherhood by bribing man with comfort and prosperity, and by teaching him to behave rationally. He emphasizes that the only way to build a commune is to found it upon feeling and human nature rather than on reason:

“Everything is grounded in feeling, in nature, not in reason” (50).<sup>120</sup> He goes on to say: “Love one another, and all these things will be added unto you” (50).<sup>121</sup> This is almost a direct allusion to the Gospel of Luke:

...seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Luke 12: 29-31)

Dostoevsky alters this phrase by fusing into it the commandment that were given by Jesus Christ to his Apostles in the Gospel of John: “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12). Yet, Dostoevsky’s altered phrase seems to be modeled after what Jesus said earlier in the very same chapter of the Gospel of John: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). Therefore, one may suggest that Dostoevsky considers faith in Jesus Christ to be the only natural way of creating an ideal society.

### ***Crime and Punishment***

In his novel *Crime and Punishment* (1866), Dostoevsky evokes the image of the Crystal Palace again. In this novel, he further develops the ideas raised in *Notes from Underground*. He demonstrates that the Crystal Palace is an instrument of dehumanization and oppression for both its tenants and its creators. Using the image of the Crystal Palace, he

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<sup>120</sup> “Все основано на чувстве, на натуре, а не на разуме” (Dostoevskii 5: 80).

<sup>121</sup> “Любите друг друга, и все сие вам приложится” (Dostoevskii 5: 80).

also attempts to prove that any theory based on reason instead of human nature leads to hell rather than paradise.

In *Crime and Punishment*, the Crystal Palace is a tavern at Sennaya, St. Petersburg's version of London's Haymarket (which Dostoevsky groups together with the Crystal Palace at Sydenham in his *Winter Notes*). This "Crystal Palace" is "a quite spacious and even orderly tavern with several rooms, all of them rather empty, however" (159).<sup>122</sup> Raskolnikov runs into this tavern accidentally, but stops there for a while to read the news about the murders he committed. There he meets Zametov, one of the detectives investigating the crime. In the span of their conversation, Raskolnikov teases Zametov by giving him hints about who murdered the pawnbroker. However, he does not want to confess to the murder: he is merely driven by the desire to "stick his tongue out" at those who are unsuccessfully trying to find the murderer—who, of course, is Raskolnikov himself. The expression "to stick one's tongue out at something/somebody" is a direct allusion to *Notes from Underground*. Dostoevsky even puts it in quotation marks, as if to emphasize its source: "...Raskolnikov suddenly felt a terrible urge to 'stick his tongue out'" (163).<sup>123</sup>

As was mentioned earlier, the Underground Man uses this expression in his final rejection of the ideal of the Crystal Palace. He exclaims that he is afraid of this glass edifice and the world it represents because he is not allowed to stick his tongue out at it. The act of sticking one's tongue out at something/somebody is a manifestation of man's "sweet foolish will"—the "most valuable good," which the Socialists overlook. They believe that all human conduct is determined by the laws of nature and thus, as soon as the mathematical formula behind all human whims is discovered, man will no longer experience desire and will finally become happy in the calculated, rational world of the the Crystal Palace. Taking into account

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<sup>122</sup> "весьма просторное и даже опрятное трактирное заведение о нескольких комнатах, впрочем довольно пустых" (Dostoevskii 6: 123).

<sup>123</sup> "...Раскольникову ужасно вдруг захотелось [...] 'язык высунуть'" (Dostoevskii 6: 127).

that Raskolnikov wishes to “stick his tongue out” at Zametov while they are sitting at the Crystal Palace, one may assume that this urge reflects Raskolnikov’s desire to assert his free will.

This is not the only moment in *Crime and Punishment* when Raskolnikov experiences a desire to stick his tongue out at something. The first time he yearns to do so is right after he has committed the murder. Even though it is not explicitly stated during this scene in the novel, Raskolnikov recalls this fact during his conversation with Zametov at the Crystal Palace:

And in a flash he recalled, with the extreme clarity of a sensation, that recent moment when he was standing with the axe behind the door, the hook was jumping up and down, the people outside the door were cursing and trying to force it, and he suddenly wanted to shout to them, curse at them, stick his tongue out, taunt them, and laugh loudly—laugh, laugh, laugh! (162)<sup>124</sup>

Raskolnikov is recalling the moments immediately following the murder, when he was standing just behind the door of the pawnbroker’s apartment. He was terrified by the possibility of being caught by two men standing on the other side of the door and trying to enter the apartment:

He was as if in delirium. He was even readying himself to fight with them when they came in. Several times, while they were knocking and discussing, the idea had suddenly occurred to him to end it all at once and shout to them from behind the door. At times he wanted to start abusing them, taunting them, until they opened the door. (84)<sup>125</sup>

Nonetheless, when (while sitting in the “Crystal Palace” with Zametov) he recollects his memories of that day, he likens this feeling to the desire to assert his free will – to stick his tongue out at those who might have caught him on the spot. Thus, on both occasions

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<sup>124</sup> “И в один миг припомнилось ему до чрезвычайной ясности ощущения одно недавнее мгновение, когда он стоял за дверью, с топором, запор прыгал, они за дверью ругались и ломились, а ему вдруг захотелось закричать им, ругаться с ними, высунуть им язык, дразнить их, смеяться, хохотать, хохотать, хохотать!” (Dostoevskii 6: 126).

<sup>125</sup> “Он был точно в бреду. Он готовился даже драться с ними, когда они войдут. Когда стучались и сговаривались, ему несколько раз вдруг приходила мысль кончить всё разом и крикнуть им из-за дверей. Порой хотелось ему начать ругаться с ними, дразнить их, покамест не отперли” (Dostoevskii 6: 68).



when Raskolnikov shows his desire to “stick his tongue out,” he is sitting at the Crystal Palace, and both instances are linked to the murder of the pawnbroker. Accordingly, one may surmise that, for Raskolnikov, the desire to “stick his tongue out” and assert his free will is closely intertwined with the murder that he committed.

Significantly, when he tries to persuade the prostitute Sonya to quit her current occupation and follow him later on in the novel, he reveals to her his motive for the murder: “[Freedom and power, but] above all, power! Over all trembling creatures, over the whole [anthill]!... That is the goal! Remember it! This is my parting word to you!” (330).<sup>126</sup> He accounts for his violent deed by confessing that he aimed to acquire freedom and power over “all trembling creatures” (“тварь дрожащая”) and the entire anthill (“над всем муравейником”). “Trembling creature” (“тварь дрожащая”) is a term from his article on crime where he describes his theory about two types of men. According to his theory, all of humanity is divided into two categories: trembling creatures and extraordinary people. The first category consists of those who should be submissive and do not have the right to transgress the law. On the contrary, the second category is comprised of those who are, by nature, capable of contributing something new and unconditionally beneficial (of uttering a “New Word” in Raskolnikov’s terminology) to the world. Such people have the right to commit any crime as long as it is perpetrated in order to make room for their “New Word” or contribution. Raskolnikov committed his crime in order to prove that he belongs to the second category—those who have the right to assert their will.

Moreover, in his confession to Sonya, Raskolnikov puts together the “trembling creatures” and the anthill, as if merging these two terms together. As was mentioned earlier, in Dostoevsky the latter is frequently associated with the French socialists’ ideas that were popular in Russia at that time (Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 424; Kijko in

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<sup>126</sup> “Свободу и власть, а главное власть! Над всею дрожащею тварью и над всем муравейником!.. Вот цель! Помни это! Это мое тебе напутствие!” (Dostoevskii 6: 253).

Dostoevskii 5: 371). Yet, in Dostoevsky's case, it might be a reference to Chernyshevsky's article on Lessing, in which Chernyshevsky mentions Lessing's idea that a human society might be juxtaposed with an anthill (Dostoevskii 5: 371).<sup>127</sup> Accordingly, one may suggest that Raskolnikov employs the term "anthill" as a synonym for the contemporary social system; however, it is important to remember that the anthill is an important symbol in Dostoevsky. As was discussed earlier in this chapter, in *Winter Notes*, the creation of the anthill-like community signifies the end of world history and the cessation of all further human striving, hope, and aspiration. Then, in *Notes from Underground*, this symbol recurs and is perceived by the Underground Man as a manifestation of finality, the beginning of the death of a "living soul" with all its wishes and "foolish sweet will." Moreover, in both of these works, the cessation of all human desire is linked with the idea of "maintain[ing] the status quo [of humanity]" (*Winter Notes* 36).<sup>128</sup> As was stated, this idea seems to be inspired by Herzen, whose book, *From the Other Shore* (1847–50), includes the following passage: "If humanity went straight to some goal there would be no history, only logic; humanity would stop in some finished form, in a spontaneous *status quo* like the animals..." (qtd. in Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 424). Taking this into account, it seems logical to posit that in order to live in an anthill-like community, man must be transformed into a domesticated and submissive animal. Thus, it is no surprise that, from Raskolnikov's perspective, the entire anthill, or contemporary society, is inhabited by "trembling creatures"—or ordinary people who should be submissive and do not have the right to conceive of any wishes.

In addition, as also was discussed earlier, in both *Winter Notes* and *Notes from Underground*, it is explicitly stated that the anthill and the Crystal Palace are the same. What

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<sup>127</sup> "Lessing, his time, his life and work" (1856–1857).

<sup>128</sup> "остановиться на status quo" (Dostoevskii 5: 69).

is more, the Underground Man asserts that even if the Crystal Palace exists man can go mad or contrive ways to bring about destruction in order to assert his free will and to prove to himself that he is still a man and not an organ-stop. Likewise, Raskolnikov commits murder in order to prove to himself that he is not a submissive “trembling creature,” but the type of person who has the right to assert his free will. Even though, from the Underground Man’s perspective, destruction is nothing more than a man’s last attempt to save his personality and “living soul,” it is evident that any crime is explained according to the Underground Man’s logic: by asserting his free will man opposes the inhuman and inhumane ideal of the Crystal Palace.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the protagonist of *Notes from Underground* is “not only the accuser but also one of the accused” (Skaftymov; qtd. in Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 415). He who boasts about his consciousness and sensibility, behaves in a self-destructive way. Yet, he expects others to interact with him even if they find his company unpleasant, and he finds pleasure in humiliating them (for example, at Zverkov’s farewell-party). Thus, the only emotional interactions he can have with others are those that are grounded in mockery and humiliation.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is significant that Dostoevsky defines his hero as an inevitable product of Russian cultural development. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Russian intellectuals and social elites had been emulating Western European culture for decades, and they had been longing to become as developed and enlightened as the Europeans. The Underground Man is a typical nineteenth-century intellectual: he is familiar with the literary and philosophical traditions of Germany, France, and England, and he has developed a sense of the “sublime and beautiful.” Deprived of any real life experience, he tries to live in accordance with the ideas he absorbed from the books he has read (among them, Heinrich Heine, Jean-Jacques Rousseau). Even his encounter with

the prostitute Liza is appealing to him only because it gives him a chance to rescue a prostitute from a life of degradation—a standard plot of progressive novels of the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, he is well-aware that he is hardly an appropriate person to save anyone: he is more miserable in his life than she is. Consequently, he only instigates another conflict with reality and subjects himself to humiliation. In his book *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time*, Joseph Frank accounts for the detrimental effect that reading has on the

Underground Man:

Books interpose a network of acquired and artificial responses between himself and other people, and, since we are in the world of the Russian intelligentsia of the 1840s, these books could only have been the works of the French Utopian Socialists and the Social Romantics and their Russian disciples on which Dostoevsky himself had then battered. (431)

The Russian scholar Aleksandr Skaftymov remarks that, by creating such a character as the Underground Man, Dostoevsky attempts to destroy his opponents “from within, carrying their logical presuppositions and possibilities to their consistent conclusion and arriving at a destructively helpless blind alley” (qtd. in Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 415). Elaborating on this idea, Joseph Frank suggests that the Underground Man should be analyzed as a social-ideological type, whose “psychology must be seen as intimately interconnected with the ideas he accepted and by which he tries to live” (Frank, *Dostoevsky. A Writer in His Time* 415).

Like the Underground Man, Raskolnikov is a social-ideological type of his time. In one of his letters, Dostoevsky writes that the protagonist of his novel carries out the crime while under the influence of “strange, half-baked ideas that are floating about in the air” (qtd. in Leatherbarrow “Crime and Punishment” 256). Fittingly, after his first visit to the pawnbroker (before he commits the murder), Raskolnikov hears a conversation between two young men at a tavern. They talk about Alyona Ivanovna, the pawnbroker, and one of them argues that she is “actively harmful” (вредна) and that it would therefore be justified to kill

her in order to save the lives of thousands:

Kill her, take her money and with the help of it devote oneself to the service of humanity and the good of all. What do you think, would not one tiny crime be wiped out by thousands of good deeds? For one life thousands would be saved from corruption and decay. One death, and a hundred lives in exchange—it's simple arithmetic! Besides, what value has the life of that sickly, stupid, ill-natured old woman in the balance of existence? No more than the life of a louse, of a black-beetle, less in fact because the old woman is doing harm. (54)<sup>129</sup>

This idea is exactly the same as Raskolnikov's and he even employs the very same term—he also describes the pawnbroker as a “louse.” Moreover, like the young men, Raskolnikov also likens his deed to “arithmetic” (арифметика).

Furthermore, when he is pondering the reasons that incited him to kill the pawnbroker, he recalls his friend Razumikhin's speech against Socialist ideas:

Why was that little fool Razumikhin abusing the Socialists today? They're hardworking, commercial people, concerned with 'universal happiness'... No, life is given to me only once, and never will be again—I don't want to sit waiting for universal happiness. I want to live myself; otherwise it's better not to live at all. And so? I just didn't want to pass by my hungry mother, clutching my rouble in my pocket, while waiting for 'universal happiness.' To say, 'I'm carrying a little brick for universal happiness, and so there's a feeling of peace in my heart.' (274)<sup>130</sup>  
In the process of recalling Razumikhin's anti-Socialist ideas, Raskolnikov confesses

to himself that he committed the murder because he is unwilling to wait until the state of “universal happiness” (“всеобщее счастье”) is reached. He wants to live now and have the money, which he believes he needs in order to reach his own goal of helping his family and other people. He seems to be convinced that he is committing the murder out of self-interest

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<sup>129</sup> “Убей ее и возьми ее деньги, с тем чтобы с их помощью посвятить потом себя на служение всему человечеству и общему делу: как ты думаешь, не загладится ли одно, крошечное преступленье тысячью добрых дел? За одну жизнь – тысячи жизней, спасенных от гниения и разложения. Одна смерть и сто жизней взамен – да ведь тут арифметика! Да и что значит на общих весах жизнь этой чахоточной, глупой и злой старушонки? Не более как жизнь вши, таракана, да и того не стоит, потому что старушонка вредна” (Dostoevskii 6: 54).

<sup>130</sup> “За что давеча дурачок Разумихин социалистов бранил? Трудолюбивый народ и торговый; “общим счастьем” занимаются... Нет, мне жизнь однажды дается, и никогда ее больше не будет: я не хочу дожидаться “всеобщего счастья”. Я и сам хочу жить, а то лучше уж и не жить. Что ж? Я только не захотел проходить мимо голодной матери, зажимая в кармане свой рубль, в ожидании “всеобщего счастья”. “Несу, дескать, кирпичик на всеобщее счастье и оттого ощущаю спокойствие сердца” (Dostoevskii 6: 211).

and love of humanity. Significantly, Raskolnikov's theory stems from the utilitarian ethic rooted in the principles of rational egoism (Leatherbarrow 69; Frank, *Between Religion...* 47). As was discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, such an ethic was developed by Nikolai Chernyshevsky. In his article "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" (1860), Chernyshevsky attempts to demonstrate that the human "sciences," (namely the natural sciences), are amenable to rationally deducible laws. Consequently, he denies the concept of an absolute morality rooted in spiritual sources and believes that man's values must derive from his physical being. Building upon this assumption, he asserts that what is good for an individual is that which serves one's self-interest, whereas what is good for society is that which serves the greater interest of the greater number of people. Chernyshevsky's ideas had a great influence on the younger generation of the radical intelligentsia of the 1860s (Leatherbarrow 69). Accordingly, one may surmise that Raskolnikov's act of free will (the murder) derives from the very same idea, which gave birth to the ideal of the Crystal Palace.

Furthermore, it seems that his "idea" inherits some of the features of the ideal of the Crystal Palace. As was previously noted, in the "Crystal Palace," man will be deprived of his free will and any vestiges of human feeling, and will consequently turn into an organ-stop since all of his actions will be made to comply with the mathematical formula. Likewise, the closer Raskolnikov gets to the execution of his "benevolent" idea, the less conscious and free he becomes.

Before the murder he oscillates between the desire to execute his plan and the desire to give up on it. The fact that he vacillates between options implies that, at this point, he still has a choice and free will. Similarly, when he decides to reject his fantastic idea, he regains his ability to breathe and feels free and acknowledges that he considers his plan to be a burden on his shoulders: "...[he suddenly seemed to] breathe more easily. He felt he had just thrown off the horrible burden that had been weighing him down for so long, and his soul

suddenly became light and peaceful” (60).<sup>131</sup>

On the day of the murder, he feels as if he is being dragged forth by some powerful force: “...as if someone had taken him by the hand and pulled him along irresistibly, blindly, with unnatural force, without objections. As if a piece of his clothing had been caught in the cogs of a machine and he were being dragged into it” (70).<sup>132</sup> Then when he by chance finds out that Lizaveta, the pawnbroker’s sister, is scheduled to be away and his dark dream can therefore be brought to life, he almost loses his will and power of reason: “He was not reasoning about anything, and was totally unable to reason; but he suddenly felt with his whole being that he no longer had any freedom either of mind or of will, and that everything had been suddenly and finally decided” (62).<sup>133</sup>

In addition, after the murder has been committed, Raskolnikov feels that he did everything rather unconsciously: “If indeed this whole thing was done consciously and not foolheadedly, if you indeed had a definite and firm objective, then how is it that so far you have not even looked into the purse and do not know what you’ve actually gained [...]?” (110).<sup>134</sup> Accordingly, one may assume that it is not fate (“предопределение”), as Raskolnikov perceives it, but rather the idea, which infected his imagination, that spurs him to commit this murder.

Indeed, later on in the novel detective Porfiry Petrovich aptly points out that Raskolnikov was driven by the idea, rather than his own free will: “...[He] then arrived at the

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<sup>131</sup> “...ему вдруг стало дышать как бы легче. Он почувствовал, что уже сбросил с себя это страшное бремя, давившее его так долго, и на душе его стало вдруг легко и мирно” (Dostoevskii 6: 50).

<sup>132</sup> “Как будто его кто-то вел за руку и потянул за собой неотразимо, слепо, с неестественной силой, без возражений. Точно он попал клочком одежды в колесо машины, и его начало в нее втягивать” (Dostoevskii 6: 58).

<sup>133</sup> “Ни о чем он не рассуждал и совершенно не мог рассуждать, но всем существом своим вдруг почувствовал, что нет у него более ни свободы рассудка, ни воли” (Dostoevskii 6: 52).

<sup>134</sup> “Если действительно все это дело сделано было сознательно, а не по-дурачки, если у тебя была действительно определенная цель, то почему не посмотрел, сколько денег?” (Dostoevskii 6: 86).

crime as if he weren't using his own legs. He forgot to lock the door behind him, but killed, killed two people, according to a theory. He killed, but wasn't able to take the money, and what he did manage to grab, he went and hid under a stone" (456).<sup>135</sup> Therefore, the deed was not committed as a way for Raskolnikov to assert his free will, but was his way of surrendering his soul to abstract reason—a force that “crystalizes” reality.

If this is the case, it seems to be even more important that both of the times Raskolnikov expresses a desire to “stick his tongue out” (and thus to assert his free will) are not only linked to the murder of the pawnbroker, but also occur while Raskolnikov is sitting at the Crystal Palace. It is also an important detail, that when the tavern “Crystal Palace” appears for the first time in the novel, it does so under the title “Palais de Crystal” (“Пале де Кристаль”).<sup>136</sup> This is when Razumikhin invites Raskolnikov to go there. The foreign version of the tavern's name is never used again; instead, it is called “Crystal Palace” (“Хрустальный дворец”). It is worth noting that Raskolnikov is the first to refer to this tavern as “Crystal Palace” (“Хрустальный дворец”). After Raskolnikov first uses the Russian version of the tavern's name, it is repeated four times within the novel, and each of

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<sup>135</sup> “...на преступление-то словно не своими ногами пришел. Дверь за собой забыл притворить, а убил, двух убил, по теории. Убил, да и денег взять не сумел, а что успел захватить, то под камень снес” (Dostoevskii 6: 348).

<sup>136</sup> In his article “St. Petersburg in *Crime and Punishment*,” A. Burmistrov points out that “Palais de Crystal” was a real drinking establishment located in St. Petersburg. It was a hotel with a restaurant on the first floor. In this restaurant one might not only dine, but also order alcohol. This establishment was opened in 1862. As Burmistrov writes, an advertisement about the opening of this hotel appeared three times (it was a rule at that time) on the pages of *St. Petersburgs News* (“Санкт-Петербургские ведомости”). Here is the first of these advertisements: “Вновь открыта гостиница Пале-де-Кристаль, по Садовой улице и Вознесенскому проспекту, в доме госпожи Вонлярской, где можно получать номера для приезжающих, обеды и закуски из лучших блюд; вино по сходным ценам. А. Миллер” [The hotel Palais de Crystal is open again at Sadovaya Street at Voznesensky Prospekt, at the house of madame Vonlyarskoy, where one can reserve a room, lunch and snacks composed of the best dishes; wine at an appropriate price. A. Miller] (qtd. in Burmistrov). Burmistrov also asserts that Dostoevsky knew about this hotel and even wrote in his notes to one of the drafts of *Crime and Punishment*: “На углу Садовой и Вознесенского я набрел на одну гостиницу, и так как я знал, что в ней есть газеты, то и зашел туда, чтобы прочесть в газете, под рубрикой ежедневных событий, о том, что там написано об убийстве старухи” [At the corner of Sadovaya Street and Voznesensky Prospekt, I ran into a hotel, and just as I was sure there would be, there were newspapers; I came there only to read in a newspaper, under the section of daily news, about the murder of an old lady] (qtd. in Burmistrov). What is more, he underscores that the fictional tavern “Palais de Crystal” is located in the very same building as the real hotel: at the corner of Bolshaya Sadovaya St. and Voznesensky Prospekt.



these times is in reference to one of Raskolnikov's visits there. Thus, this tavern is defined as the Crystal Palace only after Raskolnikov's visit. As William Leatherbarrow emphasizes, in *Crime and Punishment*, time and space are inextricably linked with and dependent upon Raskolnikov's consciousness. He points out that temporal and spatial dimensions are changing all the time as if reflecting the changes in the inner-state of Dostoevsky's protagonist:

The hero's room, crushingly claustrophobic with its yellow, peeling wallpaper, seems to expand and open out during his periods of lucidity and optimism. The stiflingly narrow back streets of the capital seem like an extension of Raskolnikov's state of mind, a psychic, rather than topographic labyrinth through which he moves. Indeed, at times it is difficult to tell where Raskolnikov ends and St. Petersburg begins. ("Crime and Punishment" 256)

To elaborate on this, one may suggest that the "Crystal Palace" can be considered as a projection of Raskolnikov's state of mind after he has executed his "idea"; however, in this context, it stands not for the Socialist ideal of the Crystal Palace, but rather for a "crystallized" realm of abstract reason.

What is more, this tavern is located in St. Petersburg—the city that the Underground Man calls "the most abstract and premeditated city in the whole world" (266).<sup>137</sup> Indeed, according to the city's mythology, St. Petersburg is a paragon of the triumph of reason over nature: by the will of Peter the Great this city was built at the site of a swamp—the most unsuitable spot for any type of construction. Accordingly, one may suggest that St. Petersburg, as a "pure" product of reason, is akin to the thoroughly calculated and rational world of the Crystal Palace. Fittingly, the glass imagery prominently corresponds to the city's nickname—the window on the West. Furthermore, St. Petersburg itself is designed in imitation of the Western cities, which Dostoevsky so negatively portrayed in his *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*. The depiction of St. Petersburg in *Crime and Punishment* is particularly close to

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<sup>137</sup> "самый отвлеченный и умышленный город на всем земном шаре" (Dostoevskii 5: 101).

that of London in Dostoevsky's travelogue. In *Crime and Punishment*, the magnificent panoramas of St. Petersburg are only facades behind which its true essence lies—bars, brothels, tiny flats full of lower class citizens who live in horror and despair. Likewise, in *Winter Notes*, the narrator points out that even though everything in the British capital is “colossal” and “triumphant” (bars are embellished like palaces, prostitute's quarters are lighted by gas lamps), it is all merely an embellishment: the real life of the workers in London is ugly and severe. Moreover, the author of *Winter Notes* underscores that the citizens of London systematically “lose” their minds by excessively and voraciously consuming alcohol, because they cannot cope with reality. Similarly, one of the main male protagonists of *Crime and Punishment*, Svidrigailov, notes that St. Petersburg is a city inhabited by “half-crazy people” (“полусумасшедшие”). Accordingly, it seems logical to assume that London might be considered as a sister-city of St. Petersburg in Dostoevsky's oeuvre.

Furthermore, in *Crime and Punishment*, the tavern “Crystal Palace” seems to take on the features of the original glass edifice at Sydenham as it was portrayed in Dostoevsky's travelogue, *Winter Notes On Summer Impressions*. St. Petersburg's “Crystal Palace” not only inherits the name of the original Paxton's Palace, but is also a tavern located at Sennaya—St. Petersburg's version of the British Haymarket, or prostitutes' quarter. As was mentioned earlier, in *Winter Notes*, Dostoevsky equates the British Crystal Palace with bars and brothels by depicting all of these “institutions” as manifestations of Baal-worship. In Dostoevsky's travelogue, Baal is a symbol of modern idolatry (materialism), but, as was suggested earlier, it can also be associated with the Devil himself.<sup>138</sup> Significantly, in *Winter Notes*, Dostoevsky juxtaposes Western scientific progressivism, utopianism and “enlightment” with Russian Orthodox Christianity and innate brotherly love (Patterson x). From his perspective, Western society is steeped in atheism and egocentrism and therefore fails to be united into a

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<sup>138</sup> As was mentioned earlier, the name of Beelzebub, the chief of the demons in the New Testament (Matthew 12: 24-27), is derived from “Baal:” Baal-zebub (Lurker 27).

community of free and equal people. He asserts that freedom and genuine brotherhood stem only from Christian love. He believes that Russians are inclined towards brotherhood by nature and that his contemporary Russia suffers only because it is seized by Western progressive ideas (Patterson vii). Thus, the tavern Crystal Palace might be considered as a symbol of Western ideals and atheism.

Chernyshevsky's ethic, from which Raskolnikov's theory derives, aimed to "substitute for the Christian morality of love and self-sacrifice one based on a purely home-brewed Russian amalgam of [British] Benthamine utilitarianism and Utopian socialist idealism (labeled "rational egoism")" (Frank, *Between Religion...* 47). As was mentioned earlier, Chernyshevsky denies the concept of an absolute morality rooted in spiritual sources and believes that man's values must derive from his physical being. From his perspective, what serves one's self-interest is good for an individual, whereas what serves the greater interest of a greater number of people is ultimately good for society. Dostoevsky seems to build the value system of his novel on these demonic implications. The very idea of the existence of an extraordinary man who is capable of uttering a New Word is thoroughly anti-Christian.<sup>139</sup> When Raskolnikov attempts to utter a New Word and to transgress the moral laws, he trades places with God: he aims to topple Him. In her analysis of *Crime and Punishment*, Nancy Anderson comes to the conclusion that "Raskolnikov's desire to emulate Napoleon represents a secular version of the idealization of the demon: he regards Napoleon as the one who defies not only human but also divine law, who is not afraid to cross the moral boundary, to transgress" (125).

It is also worth mentioning that Raskolnikov refers to the forces that spurred him to commit the murder as "bewilderment" (наваждение), "spells" (чары), and "sorcery"

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<sup>139</sup> As was mentioned earlier, according to Raskolnikov's theory, there exist "extraordinary" people who need not abide by the law if they believe that their transgressions will help them better serve humanity (and utter a "New Word").

(колдовство). All of these words have demonic overtones in their meanings. Moreover, when he vacillates between the desire to execute his plan or to abandon it, he calls on God to help him: “‘Lord!’ he pleaded, ‘show me my way; I renounce this cursed... dream of mine!’ [...] Freedom, freedom! He was now free of that spell, magic, sorcery, obsession!” (60).<sup>140</sup> He perceives the repudiation of his plan as the epitome of freedom. Therefore, one may suggest that Raskolnikov is only seized by this ‘dream’ momentarily (as if the devil possesses him), but can still be redeemed.

It is a commonplace in Dostoevsky scholarship that Raskolnikov has two doubles in the novel (Mochulsky 370, Anderson 126). The first one is Svidrigailov, “who possesses the Napoleonic qualities of strength and ruthlessness to a greater degree than Raskolnikov, but who at the same time leads a far uglier existence” (Anderson 126). Svidrigailov represents the way of life opposed to God. He even envisions eternity as a “bathhouse with spiders.” Such a vision is redolent of hell rather than of paradise. On the contrary, Raskolnikov’s second double embodies faith in Jesus Christ and a promise of spiritual regeneration. This second double is Sonya. Significantly, Raskolnikov unwillingly admits his similarity to Svidrigailov, but with a great zeal recognizes the potential of the extraordinary man in Sonya. He claims that her act of self-sacrifice is aligned with his. He imagines that he committed the murder of one useless louse in order to help thousands of good and useful ones. However, he makes a mistake by comparing himself with Sonya. While his self-sacrifice is entirely theory-based and self-centered, Sonya’s self-sacrifice is completely irrational. She conceives of sacrifice as valuable, not only for the sake of her neighbors, but for its own sake: she blames herself for everything bad that happens in the life of her family. As Mitchell points out, such a mentality is aligned with “certain trends of Russian kenoticism” (213). The scholar explains

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<sup>140</sup> “Господи! – молил он, – покажи мне путь мой, а я отрекаюсь от этой проклятой... мечты моей!” [...] Свобода, свобода! Он свободен теперь от этих чар, от колдовства, обаяния, от наваждения! ” (Dostoevskii 6: 50).

that many Russian saints were canonized solely for their sufferings. She also mentions “holy fools”—“the most radical representatives of the Russian kenotic tradition, who voluntarily feigned madness in order to symbolize their sacrifice of all worldly esteem” (213).

Significantly, Raskolnikov calls Sonya a holy fool (юродивая) (but only in his thoughts).

Furthermore, Raskolnikov’s encounter with Sonya is evocative of that between the Underground Man and Liza. Like Sonya, Liza embodies the idea of irrational Christian love. Even after the Underground Man has humiliated her, she embraces him out of a desire to comfort him. She is sensitive enough to recognize that he is unhappy and that his cruelty and apathy are only a mask. Her act is the epitome of irrationality and true Christian self-sacrifice, which are characteristics of the true Crystal Palace, the one that the Underground Man will long for, but only 16 years later. Thus, even though the passages about the “true” Crystal Palace were censored and omitted from *Notes from Underground*, one may argue that the idea of irrational Christian love as a foundation for healthy human relationships and brotherhood is still presented in this novella.

It is also an important detail that, when Liza leaves the Underground Man’s house, she slams a door that is made of glass: “But at that moment I heard the heavy glass street-door open with a creak and with difficulty and slam heavily. The noise reverberated on the stairs” (374).<sup>141</sup> In her analysis of this scene, Julia Chadaga comes to the conclusion that despite being transparent and therefore invisible, this glass door is a barrier nonetheless and thus represents the “separation of the Underground Man from ‘living life’” (193). One may also suggest that after having rejected an opportunity to experience ‘real’ life the Underground Man remains trapped in his “crystalized” realm of reason and his “sublime and beautiful” dreams. Indeed, it is but his consciousness and intellect that paralyze him, alienate him from society, and force him to lock himself in his “dark cellar,” his imaginary “underground.” And

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<sup>141</sup> “...в ту же минуту я услышал снизу, как тяжело, с визгом отворилась тугая наружная стеклянная дверь на улицу и туго захлопнулась. Гул поднялся по лестнице” (Dostoevskii 5: 177).

even later when he rejects the ideals of his youth and develops a hatred for the Crystal Palace, he is still incapable of achieving his ideal of the true Crystal Palace, where everything is based on feeling rather than on reason. He, who raises his voice against the Crystal Palace and yearns to live is in fact divorced from life and has to dwell in the “crystalized” world of his ideas, because being raised on Western ideals he cannot reconcile his inner conflict and conceive of love as a true Christian sacrifice.

Like the Underground Man, Raskolnikov voluntarily cuts himself off from humanity. But while the Underground Man remains within his “crystalized” realm of reason and dreams and his heart is “darkened by depravity” (“помрачено развратом”), Raskolnikov has a chance to morally regenerate. At the end of the novel, he seems to find his faith in God and fall in love with Sonya, who embodies the ideal of the true Crystal Palace that is grounded in faith in Jesus Christ.

Thus, in Dostoevsky, the Crystal Palace is not a “moral and physical palliative” (Landon 28), but rather a destructive force. Just as in *Winter Notes* it is implicitly identified as the Devil’s temple, in *Notes from Underground* and *Crime and Punishment* it is opposed to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. In the latter, the beautiful “crystal” edifice is transformed into a tavern, as if being unmasked and divested of its mesmerizing beauty. However, it is in *Crime and Punishment* that Dostoevsky reveals how dangerous this glass structure is for both its tenants and its creators. Being seized by contemporary ideas, Raskolnikov surrenders his soul to the “crystalized” powers of his idea and reason. Driven by the desire to assert his free will and “stick his tongue out at” the contemporary social system, he develops a theory from ideas that are “in the air” and that in fact stem from socialist aspirations of the creating a better world (the Crystal Palace, a phalanstery, an anthill). In Dostoevsky, theoretical approaches to reality do not give rise to happiness and brotherhood, but rather lead to the destruction of one’s neighbor. Following his false idea of justice, Raskolnikov not only commits the

murders and therefore brings destruction to the world, but he also cuts himself off from humanity and becomes more deeply immersed in the inferno of reason. Only by embracing Christianity and rejecting any attempts to theorize reality does he get a chance at moral regeneration. According to Dostoevsky, moral regeneration and the final attainment of the state of absolute happiness are possible only through faith in God. In both *Notes from Underground* and *Crime and Punishment*, the Crystal Palace becomes the epitome of all and any attempts to alter reality by means of intellect. Through the image of this glass edifice, Dostoevsky asserts that reason may build hell, but never paradise.

## Conclusion

In his book *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Marshall Berman points out that “anyone who knows anything about the real building that stood on London’s Sydenham Hill [...] will be apt to feel that between Russian dreams and nightmares and Western realities falls a very large shadow” (Berman 236). Indeed, as has been shown in this thesis, two Russian writers who visited the Crystal Palace at Sydenham (Chernyshevsky in 1859 and Dostoevsky in 1862) perceived it very differently than the British who conceived it as “a three-dimensional encyclopedia of both nature and art” (Piggott 11).

Nikolai Chernyshevsky understands this building to be an incarnation of his utilitarian ideas and first showcases the glass edifice from this perspective in his article, “News on Literature, Art, Science and Industry” (1854). He then further develops his exploration of the utilitarian implications of the building in his socialist novel, *What Is To Be Done?* (1863). Taking his 1854 article as a blueprint, Chernyshevsky transforms the British spectacle into a socialist paradise entitled “New Russia” in the pages of his novel. Three years before, in his article “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy” (1860), he expressed the hope that Russians would embrace the truth and become good “husbandmen” of their land in the future, simply because “the necessity is arising for the Russian husbandman to conduct his husbandry more wisely and prudently than before” (135).<sup>142</sup> In his novel *What Is to Be Done?* he demonstrates the direction in which he believed Russia was gradually moving, and envisions the bright future of the nation as a fabulous, rural, “crystal” megalopolis, in which all people rejoice in prosperity, sexual liberation, individual self-realization and freedom.

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<sup>142</sup> “...нарастает надобность русским сельским хозяевам вести свои дела умнее и расчетливее прежнего” (Chernyshevskii 229).



After having been enlightened about their true interests, these Russians of the future are able to grow an exotic garden, a Garden of Eden, on the previously barren soil. In a similar vein, the main protagonists of his novel help those who are in poverty or a state of moral degradation to regenerate by teaching them to live in accordance with their self-interests and be faithful to their own emotions and needs. From Chernyshevsky's perspective, the only way for Russia to solve its social and economic problems is to graft Western European ideas onto the Russian soil—to build a “crystal” greenhouse by following the lead of European social engineers and “gardeners” such as Robert Owen, John Stuart Mill, Charles Fourier.

In his turn, Dostoevsky envisioned the Crystal Palace as a monstrous embodiment of all the worst Western ideals hidden beneath the simultaneously beautiful and repulsive mask of its “Crystal” facade. For him, this “splendid” building was a modern Tower of Babel—a monument to human vanity and ignorance—built “precisely without God, not to go from earth to heaven but to bring heaven down to earth” (Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* 26).<sup>143</sup> Even though Dostoevsky, unlike Chernyshevsky, does not meticulously alter specific features of the real building, but instead takes it as a whole and imbues it with new meaning, his symbolic treatment of the Crystal Palace is more rich and variegated than Chernyshevsky's. In each of the works in which he invokes the image of the Crystal Palace, he presents a new facet of this monstrous multi-faceted symbol. In *Winter Notes*, the Crystal Palace is a paragon of Western bourgeois order in its highest degree: it is a temple of Baal, an ant-hill, which signifies the end of world history and the total compliance of human volition with the tenets of materialism. In *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky refutes Chernyshevsky's ideal of the Crystal Palace by showing that it is not a beautiful dream, but rather a nightmare. He maintains that if this “crystal” world truly existed, it would not set its denizens free and make them happy, but would in fact oppress and dehumanize them since it

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<sup>143</sup> “...строящейся именно без бога, не для достижения небес с земли, а для сведения небес на землю” (Dostoevskii 14: 25).

is inhuman by nature and satisfies man's faculty of reason alone. In his novella, Dostoevsky also points to what he sees as the ideal way for Russia to reach salvation: faith in Jesus Christ and true Christian love. In *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky further develops this idea. In this novel, the demonic realm of "crystalized" dreams is opposed to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. In both *Notes from Underground* and *Crime and Punishment*, the Crystal Palace becomes the epitome of any and all attempts to alter reality by means of intellect. Through the image of this glass edifice, Dostoevsky asserts that reason can result in hell, but never paradise.

In the mere span of two decades, the Crystal Palace at Sydenham has been transformed by these two Russian writers into a multi-faceted symbol that became an embodiment of both Russian dreams and nightmares about the West. While Chernyshevsky imbues it with his socialist aspirations and transforms it into an earthly paradise based on rational egoism, Dostoevsky converts it into a prison-like "utopia." Nonetheless, the metamorphoses of the Crystal Palace as a symbol do not stop here...

Even though Dostoevsky does not explicitly invoke the image of the Crystal Palace in his later novels, the project of Shigalev in *Demons* (1872) and the world of the Grand Inquisitor that is depicted in *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) were patently affiliated with it in Dostoevsky's mind. In his prefatory speech at the readings of the legend of the Grand Inquisitor on December 30, 1879 that took place at the "literary morning" organized in order to support students of St. Petersburg's University, Dostoevsky said:

In one of his most painful minutes a man who suffered from atheism wrote a wild, fantastic poem in which he depicted Christ talking with one of the Catholic high priests—the Grand Inquisitor. The suffering of the creator of this poem stems from the fact that in depicting his high priest, who possesses a Catholic mindset that is drastically remote from the ancient apostles' Orthodox beliefs, he sees a true servant of Christ. Meanwhile, his Grand Inquisitor is an atheist himself. The moral is that if one alters his faith in Christ by blending it with the goals of the earthly world, the entire essence of Christianity will immediately disappear, one's mind will definitely fall prey to atheism, and instead of the great ideal of Christ, a new Tower of Babel will be erected. Christianity's elevated approach towards mankind will be lowered to

that of a herd of animals, and overt spite toward humanity will appear under the guise of *social* love. This is laid out in the form of a talk between two brothers. One brother, an atheist, tells the plot of his poem to another one.<sup>144</sup>

It is commonplace for scholars to consider the world created by the Grand Inquisitor a paragon of Dostoevsky's 'ant-hill theories.' On the basis of these theories scholars often treat Dostoevsky as a prophet of totalitarianism. Taking into account that in the process of writing the legend of the Grand Inquisitor Dostoevsky patently used the image of the Crystal Palace as a source of inspiration, one may assume that the Crystal Palace itself might be considered a earlier version of 'ant-hill theories' and thus might be perceived as a symbol of totalitarianism in Dostoevsky's works that were written in the 1860s.

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<sup>144</sup> "Один страдающий неверием атеист в одну из мучительных минут своих сочиняет дикую, фантастическую поэму, в которой выводит Христа в разговоре с одним из католических первосвященников – Великим инквизитором. Страдание сочинителя поэмы происходит именно оттого, что он в изображении своего первосвященника с мировоззрением католическим, столь удалившимся от древнего апостольского православия, видит воистину настоящего служителя Христова. Между тем его Великий инквизитор есть, в сущности, сам атеист. Смысл тот, что если исказишь Христову веру, соединив ее с целями мира сего, то разом утратится и весь смысл христианства, ум несомненно должен впасть в безверие, вместо великого Христова идеала созиждется лишь новая Вавилонская башня. Высокий взгляд христианства на человечество понижается до взгляда как бы на звериное стадо, и под видом *социальной* любви к человечеству является уже не замаскированное презрение к нему. Изложено в виде разговора двух братьев. Один брат, атеист, рассказывает сюжет своей поэмы другому." (Dostoevskii, *Brat'ia Karamazovy* 15: 198). English translation of this quotation is mine.

## APPENDIX 1



Aerial view of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham (c.1920) (*Image Archive. Web*).

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## APPENDIX 2



The Crystal Palace at Sydenham. The South end of the Nave showing the Crystal Fountain and the Great Clock by Dent of the Strand. According to the Crystal Palace Museum website, the clock face is larger than that of Big Ben. Photographed in Dufay color by Arthur Talbot—August 1936 (*Image Archive*. Web).

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